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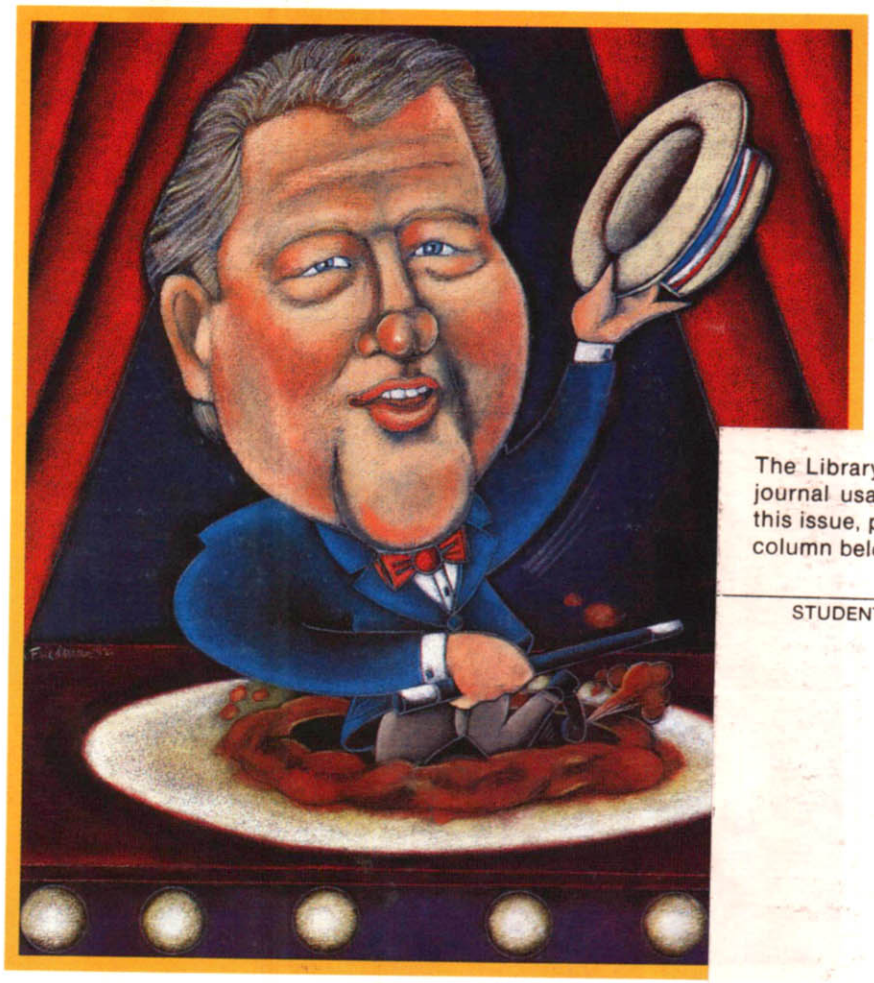
by Robert Novak



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# Israel's "Right to Exist"

## Is it important that the Arabs acknowledge it?

The Israelis wanted the second phase of the Mideast Peace Conference to convene in the respective capitals of the involved parties. It seemed like a reasonable suggestion. After all, Jerusalem is only 150 miles from Damascus, Syria, and only 80 miles from Amman, Jordan. But the Arabs, did not accept that suggestion and insisted on a site as far away from home as possible. Why would they wish to impose such inconvenience on themselves? They believed that meeting with Israel in their respective capitals might by inference be considered as their recognition of Israel's existence.

### What are the facts?

■ Despite decisive military defeats in the wars that they have launched against the Jewish state since the very day of its birth, the Arabs, in an almost unbelievable act of mental acrobatics, deny the existence of the country that has inflicted such severe and repeated punishment on them. When it becomes inevitable to mention the Jewish state it is referred to only as "the Zionist entity".

■ This non-acknowledgement of Israel's existence is not simply a matter of semantics. Arab maps do not show Israel, but a vast area, including Jordan, labeled as "Palestine". Cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa simply don't exist. Arab school children, though imbued from earliest age with hatred of the Jews, have no "official" knowledge of the existence of Israel. They learn about it, one supposes, just as they learn about sex, by whispered comments in the schoolyard. Schedules of foreign airlines that show Israel on their route maps or that list Israeli destinations are not allowed in the countries. Foreign publications (among them, one regrets to report, such U.S. magazines as *Time* and *Newsweek*) print special editions for the Arab countries, since no publication carrying advertising of Israeli firms may appear in those countries. And, of course, tourists of any nationality may not enter most Arab countries if their passports shows evidence that the holder has ever visited Israel, the "non-existent country". Not too many months ago, a U.S. Senator was barred from entering Saudi Arabia, our "faithful ally", because of an Israeli visa stamp that had been placed in his diplomatic passport.

■ As an inducement to Israel for yielding land that is absolutely indispensable for the country's defense, the Arabs now and then offer the possibility of the "recognition" of Israel's existence. The sad and almost incomprehensible aspect of that is that many well-meaning people in the U.S., in other countries, and, yes, even in Israel believe that this might be an acceptable bargain for Israel. But Israel's existence is in no way dependent on the recognition of any Arab state. *It's simple:* Israel exists because it exists. Therefore, supposing that any meaningful face-to-face meetings came about and if, say, a Syrian diplomat should ask Israel what it would be prepared to "give" if Syria would consider acknowledging Israel's existence, Israel should reply that Israel might in turn consider acknowledging *Syria's* existence. Or, Israel could declare a boycott of the Arab world and could offer to relax or to rescind such boycott in consideration of parallel gestures by the Arabs.

The bizarre concept of Israel's "non-existence" has been around for over forty years. Many good people, including quite a few in Israel itself, have been led to believe that Israel should bring substantial sacrifices, even to the point of imperiling its own security and survival, in order to get the Arabs to acknowledge Israel's existence. It is often said that Israel needs to be "recognized" by the Arabs in order to "normalize her condition". But need not the Arabs, too, live in "normalized conditions"? And Israel is often promised that, in return for yielding vital strategic territory to the Arabs, she would be assured of "safe and secure borders". But don't the Arabs also need borders that are safe and secure? The Arab countries and much of the world have come to believe that peace is only good and desirable for Israel. But it is surely at least as important for the Arabs, who have lived through and have been bloodily defeated in five wars with Israel – the "non-existent country". Peace and prosperity can and will come to this troubled region only when the Arabs accept the reality of Israel's existence and negotiate with her openly and in good faith.

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**Volume 25 Number 6, June 1992**
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## ABOUT THIS MONTH

*by*

*Wladyslaw Pleszczynski*

TO JUDGE BY the flurry of media interest in the upcoming Senate race between incumbent Arlen Specter and Lynn Yeakel, the out-of-nowhere feminist with all the usual views, the Pennsylvania Republican is in deep trouble for having dared to disagree with Anita Hill on that memorable Friday last fall. "Did this make you as angry as it made me?" Yeakel asks voters in her campaign's leitmotif. Notwithstanding polls everywhere suggesting that an overwhelming majority of Americans weren't angered at all—i.e., they didn't believe Hill, in large part thanks to Specter's prosecutorial skills—the media think and wish and pray that Specter is in very deep trouble, *and he agrees!* Rather than defend his historic performance in the Hill hearings, Specter is hoping that voters will see it as an isolated incident in a career otherwise spent appeasing feminists. "I hired women before it was fashionable," he now pleads.

CHALK IT UP to the toxic effects of what Bob Tyrrell, in his new book *The Conservative Crack-Up*, dubs the *Kultursmog*, that deadly concentration of liberal nerve gas and other poisonous vapors that turns intelligent minds into mush and courageous politicians into cowards. In his review essay (page 50), George Gilder finds in Tyrrell a kindred spirit. "In the entire world, there is no job . . . so thankless as criticizing feminism," he writes from long experience, and like Tyrrell wonders why even "the most successful conservatives ultimately play to the *Kultursmog*." Best of all (see page 53), Gilder succeeds where the eminent scholars Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Alfred Kazin have failed: he proves once and for all that R. Emmett Tyrrell is no H. L. Mencken.

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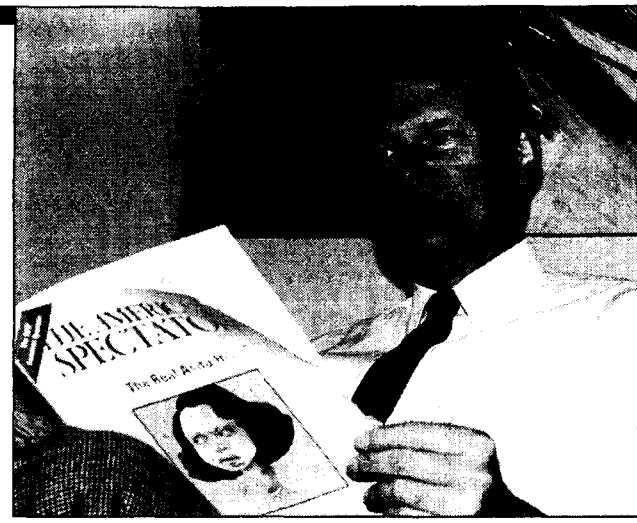

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Cover illustration by B.A. Friedman.
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• April has been filed away in history's dustbin. In San Juan Capistrano, California, more swallows arrived, proceeding again to befoul the lovely old mission with an unappetizing effluence of feces, feathers, dust, and dirt. At their first sighting in March, the town's 96-year-old patriarch, Mr. Paul Arbiso, had gamely tugged the mission bell rope, but this second visit was not a happy occasion. Health-conscious Americans, who are so quick to sneeze and to sniffle when the air bears the least trace of tobacco smoke or—worse still—a fragrance from those horrifying perfumed stickers in magazines, must surely recognize the menace to public health posed by these winged pestilences. Perhaps next year health-conscious Americans will take direct action of the kind taken by the exemplary participants in the New Zealand Easter Bunny Shoot. According to the shoot's organizer, Mr. Clark Flanagan, 250 hunters participated in this year's event. Endeavoring to eliminate three times as many of the dreadful thumpers as last year, the hunters used an excavator, helicopters overhead, and night-shooting gear to drive the mischievous animals from their burrows and make the most of these 24 hours of salubrious outdoor sport. Then all participants repaired to an unnamed hall in Alexandra, South Island, on April 11 for the traditional Bunny Hop.

• It was a bad month for the left. Mr. Georgi Atanasov, former prime minister of Communist Bulgaria, was indicted for embezzling public funds. Albanians installed their first non-Communist, freely elected government in forty-eight years, conducing to public demonstrations in which the American flag was waved almost as frequently as the Albanian flag. And an amazed world watched Britain's Labour party lose its fourth election in thirteen years despite Britain's longest economic downturn since the Depression and an underwhelming campaign by the Tory prime minister, Mr. John Major. Yet for the left it was not all somber tidings. Owing to this winter's uncommonly lush rainfalls, colossal swarms of dispendiously colorful butterflies have infested much of California, encouraging progressives to break out those butterfly nets and have a ball or just lie back and revel in the way the world ought to be—butterflies are environment-friendly and only the monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) is ever really judgmental.

• On April 7, professors at Stanford University were dealt a blow when the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors banned skateboards on campus. Mr. Irvin Dawid, who bears the curious title of transportation chairman of the Sierra Club, proposed that a distinction be drawn between skateboards used for transportation and those used for recreation, but his idealistic efforts availed him naught. Mr. John Gotti, the "Teflon Don," was convicted of murder and racketeering. Mr. Dick Gregory, the civil rights humorist and diet guru, was arrested for shoplifting a $10 jar of bee pollen pills from a health food store. President Alberto Fujimori suspended Peru's constitution. General Manuel Noriega was found guilty of being a common drug merchant, and his wife Felicidad was nabbed stealing buttons from expensive dresses in a Miami department store. Home Box Office is being sued by the Denver Broncos' Mr. Vance Johnson for broadcasting previously recorded footage of his genitalia worldwide during a taping of his coach's locker-room declamation last January. "It was very embarrassing and humiliating to Vance because it showed frontal nudity," explained Mr. Vance's lawyer, and his unease was not assuaged by the fact that the HBO show was called "Inside the NFL."

• Mr. Sam Walton, friend and provisioner to middle America, passed away on April 6, as did Mr. Isaac Asimov. Eight days later Mr. Sammy Price, known to jazz aficionados as the "King of Boogie Woogie," also passed on. In higher education news, thirty-five persons were arrested at the University of Michigan's Hash Bash, and Miss Anita Hill auspicated her self-effacing, unassuming, really rather embarrassing, $11,000-a-shot lecture tour on sexual harassment, taking her to such sexual war zones as the Yale University Law School—and at the special request of Dean Guido Calabresi, who really has very little to worry about, the Law School gals being about as sexually tantalizing as, well, Miss Anita Hill. The Duke University basketball team won its second consecutive NCAA title. The Supreme Court commenced to consider Pennsylvania's stringent abortion law, but abortion's friends and foes alike eschewed Washington and even Pennsylvania, taking their campaigns to fated Buffalo, New York. In Shawnee, Oklahoma, two passers-by came upon an open field containing 200 partially burned fetuses, a possible violation of that city's progressive anti-pollution code.

• A historic breakthrough was scored for the mentally disabled when the Pulitzer Board conferred its Pulitzer Prize for commentary on the paralogical Miss Anna Quindlen. Governor William Clinton won the New York Democratic primary, and Mr. Yasser Arafat survived a plane crash in Libya. Those persistent rumors that the Rev. Jesse Jackson contracted a rare staphylococcus sometime last summer causing him to transmute into a 5' 3" Eskimo, much to the embarrassment of his supporters, were laid to rest on April 28 when he twice notified the press that he deserved to be the Democrats' vice presidential nominee. In Traverse City, Michigan, scientists have discovered a mammoth fungus covering thirty-eight acres beneath a for-



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est near the Wisconsin state line. It may be the world's largest and oldest living organism, as scientists estimate its weight at about 100 tons, which is about equal to that of a blue whale—though the whale is more intelligent and politically correct.

• Human rights violations continue at the Harvard University Law School, where two students who had authored a parody in questionable taste are being threatened with disciplinary action and loss of their clerkships by militant leftists, feminists, and professors of incogitant mind, such as Professor Elizabeth Bartholet, who opines that the parody and those who defend First Amendment rights manifest "something very scary [sic] about male anger about women in this institution." In the United Kingdom, the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals has denounced Mr. Llewellyn Diamond's fundraising gimmick for a hospital charity. Mr. Diamond ingested fifty live worms from his compost heap, chasing them down with a handful of lugworms. "It's just like spaghetti," he insisted. "A quick chomp soon stops them wriggling." Yet RSPCA mouthpiece Miss Noeline Tamplin objected that "Eating live worms shows a total disregard for living things." Oyster bars could be next!

• With the end of Super Power confrontation and the relaxation of Middle East tensions, the Western family emerges as one of the world's most dangerous trouble spots. Eighty-two-year-old LeRoy Vizneau of Toledo, Ohio, strangled his wife of forty years after she repeatedly hit him with a shoe for requesting that she turn down the television set. In Santa Ana, California, Mrs. June Carter, 71, doused her wheelchair-bound husband with rubbing alcohol and set him afire after he ate her chocolate Easter bunny. Mrs. Frankie Thomas, 40, shot and killed her son Darrell, 14, when he refused to tidy his bedroom. And the aptly named Judge Robert F. McWeeny granted probation to Miss Carrie Mote in Vernon, Connecticut, who shot her fiancé after he suddenly called off their wedding. Nonetheless, Senator Edward M. Kennedy is still set on marrying Miss Victoria Reggie, a 38-year-old lawyer.

• Mr. Kenneth Hutton, a police officer in Sandusky, Ohio, merits mention as the month's most innovative thief. On April 15, he was charged with stealing eight cases of girl scout cookies and three fir trees, putting him in line for an eight-year stretch in the calaboose. From Britain, the authoritative *Sunday World* reports an imminent labor dispute between Northern Ireland's prostitutes and local sheep who have been frequenting an abandoned hotel near Derry in the company of high-paying and high-living "bachelor farmers." What will the animal rights theorists make of that? Finally, as House Speaker Thomas S. Foley battles with special counsel Malcolm R. Wilkey, reports from enlightened Bangladesh suggest there may be a better way to clean up the mess in the House of Representatives. Snake charmers have successfully rid the Bangladesh Parliament of eight poisonous snakes, and they remain on duty lest more snakes appear. The Crisis need not continue in all departments!

*—RET*


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# CORRESPONDENCE

**Poor Klare**

My attention was recently called to your January 1992 issue and the article on Adele Simmons by Joshua Muravchik ("MacArthur's Millions," *TAS*, January 1992). Mr. Muravchik criticizes Ms. Simmons for her appointment of Dr. Michael Klare as director of the Five College Program in Peace and World Security Studies while she was president of Hampshire College. The article impugns Mr. Klare's scholarship and credentials on the grounds that he graduated from the Union Institute, which is described as a non-accredited institution.

Had Mr. Muravchik done his homework, he would have discovered that the Union Institute is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. He would have discovered that our undergraduate requirements include proficiency in the field of study, excellence in scholarship, and demonstrated contributions to human knowledge. We have over 400 graduates in the field of higher education, including eight college presidents. We are proud of our graduates, and we are honored to have a scholar of such distinction as Mr. Klare among our alumni. Mr. Muravchik's poor research does little to credit either his argument or your publication.

*—John Tallmadge*
*Dean of the Graduate School*
*The Union Institute*
*Cincinnati, Ohio*

*Joshua Muravchik replies:*

Given the free-form nature of the Union Institute, it is understandable that Dean Tallmadge does not know how to evaluate homework. Nor how to present information accurately. He should have said that the Union Institute has been accredited since 1985. This has little bearing on Mr. Klare, who received his "Ph.D." in 1976 from the Union Institute, which was, as I said, a non-accredited institution.

**Rogue's Gallery**

Having pegged Oliver Stone as a crypto-fascist in his April *TAS* essay ("Ollie über Alles") Peter Collier should be interested in a bit of information I have lately been sharing with friends and acquaintances.

It has often been reported that Stone based *JFK* on two books, Jim Garrison's *On the Trail of the Assassins* and Jim Marrs's *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*. Having known Jim Marrs since we were children on Overton Avenue in Fort Worth, I can vouch for the fact that he was, well into his teens, an avid admirer of Adolf Hitler. He studied Hitler's speeches off phonograph records, and studied German to help his understanding, and also read and quoted from *Mein Kampf*, and collected all sorts of German and Nazi war memorabilia. The fact that *Crossfire* uses Hitler's "big lie" quote as an epigram is but one sign of (at least) vestigial interest in Hitler's thought.

This is not to say that Jim Marrs is active in neo-Nazi politics. Whether he is or not is unknown to me (though I trust that he is not). However, having cut his rhetorical teeth on the speeches and writings of Hitler, he now exhibits and lends to Oliver Stone certain oratorical flourishes of highly dubious parentage. His longings for the bygone glory days of Camelot, his dark suspicions of the powers that be, his calls to "take back" our country from the usurpers, all have an unsettling historical resonance. And how interesting that Oliver Stone, with such observable dictatorial tendencies as Collier pointed out, should gravitate to Marrs's tendentious and suspicious-minded book of all the hundreds available.

*—Miles Hawthorne*
*Granbury, Texas*

Peter Collier is demonstratively wrong in speculating that "[Donald] Sutherland's words might well have been scripted by the Christic Institute."

In fact, Sutherland's words came straight from Col. L. Fletcher Prouty, former Focal Point officer between the Pentagon and the CIA and author of *The Secret Team* (Prentice Hall, 1973, and Ballantine Books, 1974).

Prouty, not Jim Garrison, is Stone's main source for the actual events in Dealy Plaza. *Gallery*, the men's magazine, published an excellent summary of Prouty's thesis around 1974. Collier ignores it at his peril.

*—Greg Lanning*
*Vancouver, British Columbia*

**Why They Must Die**

Thank you for P.J. O'Rourke's delightful skewering of liberals in his "Liberals: A Tribute" (*TAS*, April 1992). I have one niggle, however. In speaking of abortion and capital punishment, he says, "A callous pragmatist might favor abortion *and* capital punishment. A devout Christian would sanction neither." I'm curious as to where he derived that second conclusion. For most of the Christian history, Christian ethicists have taken the position that O'Rourke labels that of a callous pragmatist. The paradox seen here by contemporary sensibilities is only illusory. Both opposition to abortion and support for capital punishment are based on the idea that man is made in the image of God. A murderous assault on a human being (in the womb or out of it) is an assault on the image of God, thus directly an assault on God Himself. In other words, all homicide is attempted deicide. The extremity of the crime, then, requires the sacrifice of the life of the life-taker. The foundations for this line of reasoning are (1) the aftermath of Cain's murder of Abel (Genesis 4), and (2) the prescription given to Noah after the flood (Genesis 9). The Mosaic legislation of Exodus-Deuteronomy (which lists eighteen capital crimes) is only of secondary significance in the formulation of the argument.

*—Benjamin Shaw*
*Instructor in Old Testament*
*Greenville Presbyterian*
*Theological Seminary*
*Greenville, South Carolina*

**Standing Pat**

David Frum's analysis of the Buchanan and Bush double talk on budgets—and by plain implication, of similar dissembling by the sainted Reagan himself—was enjoyable ("Spending Time With Pat," *TAS*, April 1992). Yet, in the end Frum wanders into double talk of his own via the bracing comeuppance he gives Middle America (". . . as eager to help itself to the wealth of others as the mangiest inner-city mugger"). As he must finally conclude, the latter feature of political life carries everything before it. The trouble is that Buchanan and Bush first are derided for trying to buy votes out of the pub-

*(continued on page 61)*



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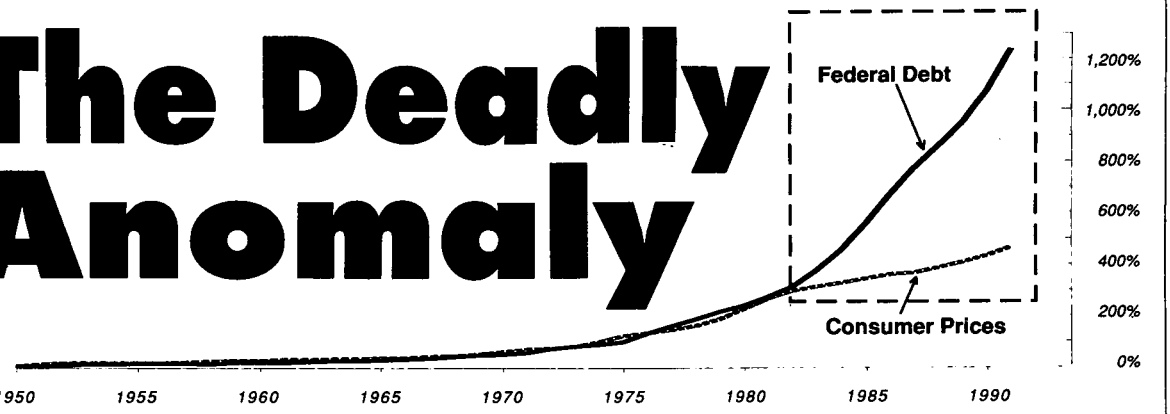
# The Deadly Anomaly




# How this economic time-bomb points to the profit opportunity of the century.

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Just 24 months ago the remarkable anomaly presented by the above graph gave birth to a brilliant investment idea. The idea was first disclosed to readers of *John Pugsley's Journal*, a privately-circulated newsletter. Those who acted have already multiplied their money by an astonishing 300%—at near-zero risk!

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This remarkable investment call resulted from 20 years of research and analysis that has uncovered one of the biggest economic distortions in history!

The great majority of economists are oblivious to the link between inflation and government debt, and have not noticed this ominous divergence in the growth of these two key measures.

One observer, however, has watched it with alarm. Economist and author John A. Pugsley, who discovered the divergence, calls it, "The Deadly Anomaly."

Why "deadly?" Because it is dramatic evidence that the U.S. is in the middle of an economic bubble of historic proportions, and the collapse of that bubble will have lethal effects on the fortunes of most savers and investors.

## A CLASSIC MANIA

The great investment bubbles of history—the Tulip-Bulb mania of 17th century Holland, the Mississippi bubble, the Roaring Twenties—all have one thing in common: *they were never seen as bubbles at the time*. Infected by the virus of soaring asset prices, the public became blind to fundamental principles of value. Amateur and professional investors alike fell victim to a euphoria that ultimately led to disaster.

It is happening again. Only this time the potential consequences are even greater.

While manias historically have occurred in relatively small asset markets (tulips, regional real estate, stocks, etc.), this time the bubble is in the biggest asset market in the world: *U.S. Treasury bonds.*

In a landmark new work, *The Interest-Rate Strategy*, John Pugsley exposes the key elements that have led to this world-wide bond-market distortion.

The underlying problem is debt. More specifically, it is an avalanche of irredeemable government debt.

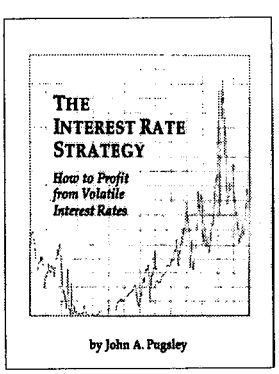
During this past decade the nation has been on the worst credit binge in history. Total federal debt has grown from $800 billion in 1981 to about *$4 trillion* today. In just 10 years Treasury debt has more than quadrupled!

The most fundamental economic laws say that as the quantity of anything increases, *the price should fall, not rise*. Yet, in the face of an unprecedented deluge of federal IOUs, *T-bond prices have soared.* It flies in the face of reason, logic, and economic law.

## INVESTOR MYOPIA

Investors are oblivious. In their euphoria they see only the bait: these bonds are assets. They fail to recognize the trap: these "assets" are also liabilities. Liabilities *that can never be repaid.*

Supporting his premises with detailed graphs and historical comparisons, Pugsley makes a sobering and incontestable case—a correction must occur, and the evidence is mounting that the correction is already underway. The anxiety over the Treasury bond auctions, fluctuating interest rates, a stalled stock market, a crisis in the banking system...all are only tiny hints of the dramatic upheavals that lie just ahead.




Because investors are oblivious of this approaching storm, *those who understand what is happening have a virtual license to steal over the next three years.*

Bond-market positions entered 24 months ago have quadrupled. They could double again within weeks. And positions held for the next two to three years could result in gains of 1,000%, 2,000% or more. That's right, we mean potential returns of 10-to-1, 20-to-1, or even greater.

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To capitalize on the coming change, *The Interest-Rate Strategy* outlines a simple plan that uses three independent bond-market mechanisms. Each has dramatic profit potential on its own, and can be entered separately. Together they are unbeatable.

You don't need to be a sophisticated investor to understand and profit from these ideas. *The Interest-Rate Strategy* sets out a 1-2-3 formula that anyone can follow. Best of all, there is no trading. This is a long-term, low-risk, buy-and-hold concept.

You can tailor the strategy to your own profit objectives and the risk level that suits your temperament. Big investor or small, conservative or speculative, this idea should be part of every financial plan. These mechanisms are ideally suited to protect holders of bonds, savings accounts, trust deeds, and pension plans against losses due to rising interest rates and bond market turmoil.

Some investors have worried that the immense gains of the past few months mean that they have missed the opportunity. Far from it. Those gains have occurred in just one segment of the plan. Two parts of this easy-to-implement strategy are now at ideal entry points, and even the 300% jump in the third part is no more than one-fourth of the anticipated move!

## THE AUTHOR

John Pugsley is an internationally respected economist and financial author. His 1974 best-selling book, *Common Sense Economics*, accurately predicted the inflationary explosion that followed the demise of the Bretton-Woods agreement. Many readers made fortunes from his advice.

In 1980, when most economists were convinced that Reagan's tax reform would balance the federal budget by the end of his first term, Pugsley's book, *The Alpha Strategy* (8 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list), boldly warned that the U.S. would experience "the largest deficits in the history of the nation in the next five years," and showed small investors how to profit.

His unique application of economic theory to commodity markets resulted in publication of *The Copper Play*, in which he predicted the price of copper had to double, and his original strategy resulted in dramatic profits for those who followed his system.

For 10 years John wrote and published *Common Sense Viewpoint*, a unique financial newsletter enjoyed by tens of thousands of devoted readers.

After a three-year vacation from financial writing, John has returned with fresh insights born of careful, systematic research. His new flagship publication, *John Pugsley's Journal*, focuses the powerful lens of science and simple common sense on world events. Like radar in the fog, these principles illuminate unseen risks and opportunities that are invisible to conventional analysis.

As his loyal readers have acclaimed for two decades, nothing in the field of economic and financial publications approaches the clarity, consistency, and logic of John Pugsley's work. Reading it will dramatically improve your understanding of the powerful forces at work in the age in which you live.

Now in *The Interest-Rate Strategy* John has once again used common sense economics to uncover what could be the investment opportunity of the century.

## ACT QUICKLY

Even as you read this, bond markets have begun to sense and react to the distortion, so we strongly urge you to read *The Interest-Rate Strategy* immediately.

The regular price is $49. However, as part of a special offer, respond now, and your cost is only $35 plus $3 shipping.

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# Big Boy Economics

*by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.*

The high honor and awesome responsibility of a Democratic presidential nomination is now within reach of Arkansas' most celebrated governor since Orval Faubus. Each day Boy Clinton provides yet another revelation of the marvels he has wrought.

At the outset of the saga, our hero leaped to center stage, proclaiming himself a bold innovator eons removed from his party's long line of fatuous big-spenders and sure losers. Boy Clinton would champion Growth, Fiscal Sanity, Competitiveness, and hey-get-me-the-name-of-that-pretty-girl-in-the-third-row. Then the primaries began and he encountered the real innovator among the Democratic candidates, Paul Tsongas. Soon Boy Clinton's ads were depicting Tsongas as an agent of Wall Street and a menace to Social Security.

Now he has revealed his panaceas for the economy, and it is manifest that Clinton is as much a believer in social engineering and Big Government as he was back in 1972 when he campaigned for George McGovern, the most radical Democratic presidential nominee in modern times. Today, all over the world, stagnant economies are overthrowing Big Government and opting for free markets, yet at the Wharton School of Business the other day, Boy Clinton offered a hoary program of tax breaks, subsidies, and trade policies for special business ventures—in sum and in fine: an elite corps of government experts with magic wands to oversee all areas of the economy. It is the Planned Economy of 1936 with a facelift.

Clinton's fundamental error is his belief that bureaucrats and professors know more about promising products and profits in various markets than entrepreneurs. But what if by some freak occurrence the bureaucrats and professors are wrong about a product?

Will they successfully prevail on President Clinton to end government support and allow bankruptcy? Experience has demonstrated at heavy cost to the taxpayer that this is not Big Government's way. As Milton Friedman, a genius among twentieth-century economists, explains, "Government actions often provide concentrated benefits while imposing widely distributed costs." The special interests reaping those benefits can always confect

a compelling case for maintaining them.

If Clinton succeeded in setting up his agencies for encouraging ventures thitherto unrecognized by free market entrepreneurs, only one thing is certain: Big Government would get bigger. After all, in recent years Big Government's only notable success has been to increase the military, win the arms race, and bankrupt the Soviet Union—an admirable achievement, but then governments were originally constituted to protect the citizenry. In his 1991 Wriston Lecture to the Manhattan Institute, Friedman explains why government bureaucrats are no improvement on free markets: "If [an] enterprise were an obvious success, it would probably already be in existence. If the enterprise is a failure that means it loses money. The people who own it have a very clear bottom line." They can keep it going only if they can afford to lose money or finagle a government subsidy, but, continues Friedman, "if a government enterprise is a failure, it is expanded. I challenge you to find an exception."

Another way of responding to Boy Clinton's scheme is to remind him that government ceased to be a solution for social and economic problems in the 1960s, when it lost the capacity to say no to militants and to the morally superior. Today it cannot even say no to dangerously antisocial louts. Only the law-abiding have to fear its authority. The front page of the *New York Times* tells us of a 34-year-old homeless man who "is considered a walking public health threat." He is a carrier of tuberculosis and tests HIV-positive. He is violent, suffers from schizophrenia, and capriciously checks himself in and out of scores of government centers at great cost and peril to all involved. Government cannot quarantine him, as it might have at the turn of the century. Yet let minor infractions of the health code be committed by an otherwise law-abiding restaurateur and—whammo.

Examples of government's futility abound. The loon who assaulted former President Ronald Reagan the other day is at large on his own recognizance. He appeared on "CBS This Morning" free to

*Adapted from RET's weekly* Washington Times *column syndicated by King Features.*



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pontificate, because a magistrate could not adjudge him a danger to society. In Morristown, New Jersey, a foul-smelling mischief-maker is free to disrupt the local library because government cannot say no and in fact had to give him a small fortune for denying him his right to stare at patrons and otherwise harass them. Still Boy Clinton places his faith in Government. As for me, I am off to Morristown to encourage the town's shapely librarian to complain that the library's tormentor stares at her bodily parts. One can be a harasser, but woe to the *sexual harasser*—suggesting another point: Our Government is incoherent. ❐

# My Maxim

Spending, as I have, the last few weeks on political assignment abroad, in tropical Grenada, democratic Czechoslovakia, London, and now our nation's capital, I excogitated a political maxim that I hereby submit to the professors of political science and other such riffraff. My maxim is: a citizenry living in prosperity and freedom becomes politically carefree; a citizenry living in poverty and tyranny is not so silly.

In Grenada and Czechoslovakia political misjudgments brought tyranny and poverty. Now Grenadians and Czechs follow politics with more care. In the prosperous West, politics has been reduced to a matter of self-expression. Frequently a man's politics serve the same purpose as a gaudy tie or chartreuse suspenders—all are meant to suggest the wonders of the inner man. Likewise, the female of the species living in a prosperous democracy chooses her politics as she chooses her hemlines and hair color. Amusement is everything.

Just recently many French, Germans, and Italians indulged their vanities by voting against their countries' established parties and for an implausible selection of extremists, misanthropes, and nincompoops. In America it is said that there is pervasive "voter dissatisfaction," and indeed some fifty percent of the citizenry does not vote. Actually it is not "voter dissatisfaction" that keeps Americans from the polls, but their carefree attitude toward the great game of politics. If Americans get it into their heads that the fall elections might lead to a dramatic reduction in their freedom or their incomes, they will vote as eagerly as they attend sports events. The astonishing defeat of Britain's Labour party proves as much.

I was in London for the elections. British Conservatives have been in power for thirteen years and, according to the pollsters, have become a bore. The country is slogging through its longest recession since the Depression. Prime Minister John Major ran a lusterless campaign, and all the polls agreed he and his party would be bounced. No commentator or politician I met either on the left or the right predicted a Conservative victory except for a young editorial writer at the *Daily Telegraph*, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard. How do we explain it?

It is true that Labour had discarded its loonier leftists, but it had not discarded tax increases, intrusive government, and the unpleasant music of class warfare. What is more, despite Labour's bloodcurdling threats against the rich, voters began to realize that Labour's tax increases were going to hit the middle class—beginning with annual incomes of $37,000—as they always do. Voters who had boasted to pollsters of their desire for change considered their freedom and their incomes and took politics more seriously. My maxim lives!

And the fatuous response of many American pundits to Labour's defeat further validates my axiom. After all, American pundits are among the freest and most prosperous alive. No wonder they are so unserious about their politics. In the aftermath of the British elections columnist Anthony Lewis, whose brain is apparently never to be freed from the Liberal glacier, selected his comments with the same narcissistic regard as he chooses his colored socks for an evening at the theater. To him it was all middle class selfishness and disregard for "health, education, and poverty"—as though Britain's welfare state can forever expand on the backs of the middle class.

In truth, Labour's historic defeat should not have been all that surprising. It is part of a world-wide trend, noted right after the election by Peter Jenkins in Britain's center-left paper the *Independent*. "Marxist socialism has declared its bankruptcy," he wrote, "and the social democratic era is drawing more gently to a close. Liberal capitalism is in the ascendent." People just do not believe that they can pay ever more in taxes to a state that promises ever more and delivers ever less. The left is no longer plausible, and frankly I doubt that many on the left believe in their blah.

On election night in London, at a party given by conservative publisher Conrad Black, I chanced upon Michael Kinsley. On CNN's "Crossfire" and in numerous publications he plays the role of the paradigmatic American Liberal. So what is it that the paradigmatic Liberal still believes in? It appears that he believes in very little aside from raising taxes and jeering at conservatives. That is not much of an agenda. ❐


**"Reaching far beyond the usual straightforward journalistic approach to homelessness,**
Golden offers a multifaceted look at what is, she points out, a centuries old phenomena....An ambitious and fascinating work...that often transcends its subject matter to tackle issues of concern to all women."—**Kirkus Reviews**

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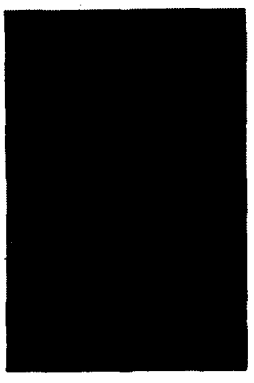

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# Darwin in the Dock

*by Tom Bethell*

"If evolution did take place," Joe Tussman was saying, "God could have used that method for his own purposes."

"How do we know that evolution did take place?" replied Phillip Johnson, seeming not to grasp the logic of the statement. Johnson is a professor of law, and Tussman an emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of California in Berkeley. The conversation was taking place at Johnson's house in Berkeley at 8:00 a.m. over breakfast. His wife, Kathie, was pouring coffee, and several other people were sitting at the table. In little over an hour Johnson would be speaking to the Southwestern Anthropological Association. The group was holding its annual meeting at the Berkeley Marina Marriott Hotel, a five-minute drive from Johnson's house.

"He said '*If* evolution took place,' " someone else said, perhaps thinking Johnson hadn't heard right.

"How do we know that evolution occurred?" Johnson repeated. Now he was plainly refusing the conversational gambit. "No one ever puts it the other way around: If God exists, what reason is there to believe in blind, naturalistic evolution in the first place?"

Johnson himself doesn't believe in it. The evidence doesn't support that hypothesis, he thinks. And if you believe in God—which he does—there's no reason to settle for a passive deity who presides over but never interferes with the haphazard results of chance and mutation.

Professors at Christian colleges, cowed by the culture into accepting the false equation of Darwinism and science, often don't get the point here, Johnson said. " 'Oh well,' they say, 'we believe in Darwinistic evolution and we're still Christian. So what's the problem?' " The problem is that their students realize there is no role for a creator in such a system, Johnson said, and they turn agnostic in droves.

"But if your question is, 'Can you reconcile some vague or weak Christianity with evolution?' " Johnson went on, "of course if you want to badly enough you can."

By now it was time to be moving along to the Marriott. Johnson would be addressing a plenary session of the conference.

It's not every day that you meet with such sentiments from a tenured professor at Berkeley's law school. How did it happen? About fifteen years ago, Johnson experienced a personal and an intellectual crisis. His first marriage broke up, and when he told his daughter, he found himself ready to rethink his whole life. He went to the Presbyterian Church on College Avenue. Listening to the minister, he thought: "You know, this guy really believes what he's saying. He lives it. And I could too."

Professionally, he had made the right moves. He had gone to Harvard, then to the University of Chicago Law School; graduated top of his class, clerked for California Supreme Court Justice Roger Traynor, then for Chief Justice Earl Warren (1966-67 term). In 1967 he became a member of the faculty at Berkeley, published articles, earned tenure. "But nothing made any sense," he said. All was shallow and self-defeating. Colleagues in the academy "could give you a thousand reasons why no positive statement could be supported. But they could give no reason to believe in anything that was important."

The idealistic spirits had decried money-grubbing corporate law. So Johnson had gone into criminal law. "And for twenty years now, academic lawyers have been worrying about the problems of crime," he said. "They made a complete hash of it, and I was one of them." (Recently, by the way, he wrote an introduction to a new edition of Anthony Lewis's book *Gideon's Trumpet*.)

In 1987, when he was a visiting professor at University College, London, he came across some books about evolution. *The Blind Watchmaker*, by Richard Dawkins, made a particular impression. The book makes the argument, familiar since Darwin, that random processes are sufficient to explain the existence of animals and plants, without having to invoke a creator. Johnson saw that actual evidence for evolution wasn't in the book, however. This was papered over by rhetoric, "just the kind of stuff that lawyers do," he told Russell Schoch of the *California Monthly*. "It gets you to accept the conclusion as an assumption and then carries you along with the brilliance of the argument."

Johnson continued to study evolution for several years, and his book *Darwin on Trial* was published by Regnery Gateway in 1991. Since then he has received many invitations to speak. His colleagues at the law school (Boalt Hall) have been tolerant, he said as he drove to the hotel. He's tactful—helps out with teaching loads and so on. But now he expected to meet some resistance from the anthropologists.

At the hotel, Johnson had a small entourage of supporters. John Wiester and Arthur Battson had come up from Santa Barbara, and there were one or two others from the Ad Hoc Committee on Origins—Walter Hearn from Berkeley, for example. These are evangelical Christians who are well in-

*Tom Bethell is* The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent and a media fellow at the Hoover Institution.*



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# *THREE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING INVENTORS IN THE UNITED STATES.*

## *And Their Careers Are Just Beginning.*

*Robert Schilling — Purdue University*
*James Versalovic — Baylor College of Medicine*
*Mark Harper — Ohio State University*

Schilling, Versalovic, and Harper are the 1992 winners of The BFGoodrich Collegiate Inventors Program, the first national competition to stimulate creativity and inventiveness among college students throughout the United States.

The BFGoodrich Company, in cooperation with the National Invention Center, established The BFGoodrich Collegiate Inventors program in 1990. This year's competition attracted 108 entries from students at 47 colleges throughout the country. The winners each received $5,000. Their faculty advisors each received $2,500.

"America's future economic vitality and competitiveness are at risk unless we can encourage students to pursue careers in science and engineering," says John D. Ong, BFGoodrich chairman and chief executive officer. "The BFGoodrich Collegiate Inventors Program aims to rekindle this necessary interest in science and engineering by rewarding students for their creativity and inventiveness."

*For more information on The BFGoodrich Collegiate Inventors Program, write Dr. Kathryn Shafer, National Invention Center, 80 West Bowery St., Akron, Ohio 44308. Or call (216) 762-4463.*

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formed about the lack of factual support for evolution, and in rejecting evolution they see no conflict with science. Like Johnson himself, they avoid the young-earth and Noah's Ark scenarios that have made Henry Morris and the Institute for Creation Research such an easy target. They constitute a small but growing counterweight to people like Thomas Jukes, William Bennetta, and Kevin Padian, associated with Bay Area Skeptics. These are professors and educators passionately committed to the evolutionist cause and to naturalism in general. For years they have been trying to stamp out impure thoughts in areas where religion and science show signs of overlapping.

Robert Anderson, an anthropologist at Mills College, politely introduced Johnson to a dozy audience of maybe 150 anthropologists: foot-soldiers in the overstuffed American academy; indirectly government-paid, to a large extent, and, judging by appearances, mentally on vacation for the duration of the conference. Clearly, they were far less disposed toward controversy than Johnson had anticipated. They write their journal articles about the joys of primitive living, sign on the dotted line against Christopher Columbus, grade their papers, and then they're home free. Come question time, half of them walked out, no doubt en route to the sauna or the buffet.

In his critique of evolution, Johnson's main point is that modern science embodies a materialist or naturalistic premise. This means that only physical causes can be admitted into the realm of science. It's assumed that the entire universe consists of nothing but atoms and molecules in motion. Invisible entities like "mind" and "God" are excluded at the outset. Evolution is then simply a deduction from these premises. It's derived logically, not observed physically. With Watchmaker excluded, the watches (creatures) that indubitably exist must therefore have come together by random means. One thing bumped into another, lightning struck the primordial soup, and pretty soon organisms were ticking away merrily and getting more and more complicated.

In an earlier talk at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, Johnson said: "Before the triumph of Darwinism, atheism was a minority position among intellectuals, because atheists had to posit a self-created universe, which seemingly violated common sense. During the nineteenth century, however, the will to discard theistic religion and substitute a naturalistic understanding of reality was very strong. Half-baked theories of evolution were in the air, and they were everywhere connected with revolt against religious and political traditions that were based upon a theistic worldview. What was needed to make the naturalistic program plausible was a thoroughly materialistic mechanism for evolution. By supplying the crucial blind watchmaker thesis, Darwin paved the way for a century and more of atheistic domination of intellectual life."

Darwin himself was hostile to Christianity, incidentally. In a passage that his family cut out of his published autobiography (his granddaughter first brought it to light in 1958), Darwin wrote: "I can hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true: for if so, the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my father, brother, and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine." Gertrude Himmelfarb has dryly remarked that Darwin "preferred a morality independent of religion and untainted by the moral defects of Christianity."

The question is whether the evidence from rocks and labs supports the theory that the history of life has constituted an unbroken parent-offspring chain going back to the first (parentless) organism. In his talk, Johnson gave some of the reasons to believe that it has not. (In his book he gives more.) Colin Patterson, a senior paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History, thought in 1982 that there was no evidence at all for evolution, and challenged American evolutionists to produce some. When Johnson spoke to him in London in 1988 Patterson had not recanted, although there has been pressure on him to do so. (Galileo, anyone?) Patterson has said that he "believes" in evolution, adding, however, that it's not supposed to be a matter of faith.

In general, evolution is said to have occurred either too quickly (in punctuated equilibrium) or too slowly (over the aeons) for us to have seen it. Either way, we don't. Johnson pointed out that there were more phyla in existence 600 million years ago than there are today, in contrast to the "cone of increasing diversity" that Darwinism leads us to expect. And he mentioned some rhetorical tricks, such as defining "evolution" non-controversially as "change over time," or as a change in the ratio of existing varieties, and then claiming that evolution has been established as a "fact."

There was a reply from Eugenie Scott, Ph.D., executive director of the National Center for Science Education, a Carnegie-funded organization that patrols the science classrooms searching out deviationism. She came across as brittle and sometimes condescending, saying that Johnson "does not present the facts accurately" and clearly was "out of his element." She was sorry to see that "even the tired old Colin Patterson story" was in his book. But she made a good point when she said that science has to work within a naturalistic framework. "Science has to pretend that God doesn't exist," she said, and I brought this up with Johnson when we went out to have a bite to eat at a restaurant on San Pablo Avenue.

Isn't it true, I said, that we can't accept miraculous explanations until we have checked out the natural ones? Surely we have to exhaust the more obvious possibilities first. Roman Catholics looking into claims of miracles at Lourdes readily accept this. Science is "prejudiced" in favor of naturalism for that reason. Johnson said he had no problem with that, if only the evolutionists would be more "honest" about the ways in which the physical evidence unearthed has failed to fit the hypothesis of evolution. "The problem is that they deceive themselves and others by claiming that they have factual proof of evolution, when they don't."

I asked Johnson if he was happy with the new direction his life has taken. "Very much so," he said, adding that in the mid-1980s the White House had seriously considered him for a vacancy on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In the end John T. Noonan got the appointment. "Thank God," said Johnson, making a church steeple with his hands and gazing devoutly to the ceiling. "I would much rather be debating Darwinists than listening to lawyers." ❐



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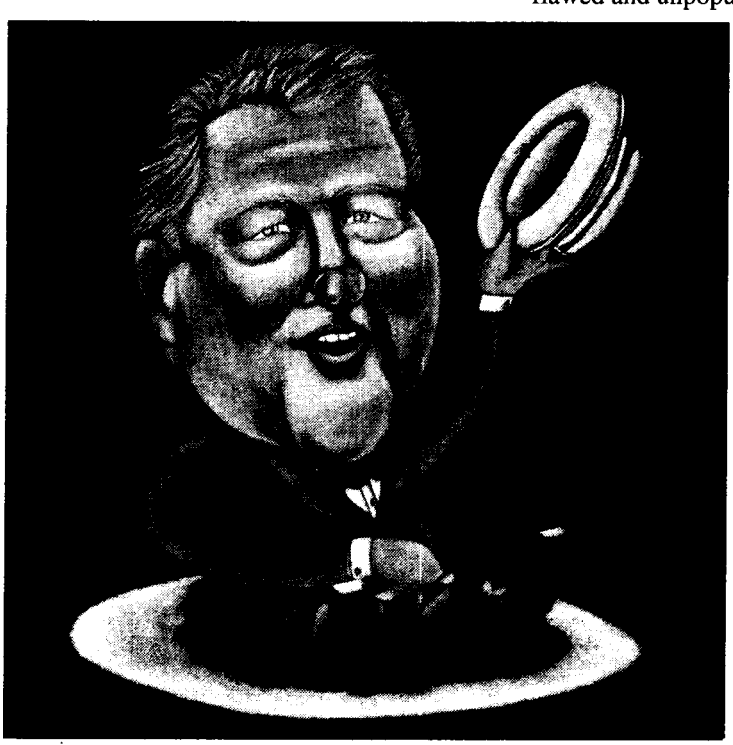
# The Trouble With Clinton

*Arkansas's boy governor always aims to please—and then denies that was ever his intention. No wonder Democrats are depressed.*

by Robert D. Novak



Ever since it became clear to Democrats that the New York primary election had effectively selected their nominee for President, the party faithful have been asking themselves in dismay what in the world is the matter with Bill Clinton: Why does he seem to be unelectable against a flawed and unpopular Republican incumbent?

On the surface, Clinton would seem to be a designer Democratic candidate: charismatic, handsome, young, smart as a whip, charming, tireless, willing and able to adjust his views to the party consensus. Against this formidable array of assets is one devastating liability: in poll after poll, more than half the voters say they do not trust or believe the governor of Arkansas.

This distrust grew quickly over less than two months. The trouble with Clinton can perhaps best be understood by looking at his response to nothing so sensational as marital infidelity, draft avoidance, or pot smoking—only the simple matter of building submarines in Connecticut.

On March 22, two days before the Connecticut presidential primary, Clinton was asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" about his pledge to rescue the Electric Boat Company of Groton, Connecticut, the state's biggest employer, by building more of the phased-out Seawolf submarines at $2 billion a copy. Andrea Mitchell of NBC asked whether that was not just plain pandering.

Clinton replied that he had proposed building the additional Seawolfs last December 12, in one of the widely praised "covenant" speeches he delivered at his alma mater, Georgetown University. "[T]his is when I could not have known if I'd be here in Connecticut or running or anything of the kind," he said. That speech, he stressed, was "to-

*Robert D. Novak is a syndicated columnist, a television commentator, and the publisher of the* Evans and Novak Political Report.



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tally out of the context of the Connecticut election. It is not pandering."

In fact, on December 12 Clinton was well aware he was running, and surely knew the dates of every primary, including the relatively early test in Connecticut. But his speech was a discussion of broad national security issues. It contained no mention of the Seawolf or of submarines.

Otto Kreisher of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, a newspaper long interested in naval affairs, noted the omission and asked the Clinton campaign what was going on. He was told the reference to the Seawolf had been edited out of the Georgetown speech, though the text mentioned no other military hardware that would be retained by Clinton if he became President.

After losing to Jerry Brown in Connecticut, Clinton was asked about the Seawolf again by Robert MacNeil of PBS in one of the New York primary debates. This time, perhaps chastened by the San Diego newspaper account, he made no claims of previously disclosing the decision at Georgetown, but otherwise stuck to his guns. He told of receiving advice from defense experts during "two extensive meetings. This is December. In December, did I even know I was going to be in Connecticut?"

But in December, Clinton had said nothing whatever about submarines. His first public statement on the Seawolf's future was not made until January 22, and then most definitely in a Connecticut political context—in conjunction with the endorsement of him for President by the state's popular Senator Joseph Lieberman.

What might be considered plain and simple lying in normal discourse is discounted for political candidates. Mangling of the truth by Jimmy Carter, who resembles fellow-Southerner Clinton in many ways, did not bar him from the White House. George Bush had somehow forgotten by 1981 that in 1980 he considered Ronald Reagan's tax cuts to be "voodoo economics," and Reagan's memory often played tricks on him.

But Clinton's response to the Seawolf question fit a pattern that has been obvious since February, and is unusual even for politicians. Considering that Clinton's steel-trap brain can remember the agonizing details of every single point in a myriad of four-point plans, it strains credulity that he could have been honestly mistaken about the Georgetown speech. Quite apart from the question of whether he was dissembling or improbably confused, his overall assertion that his stance on the Seawolf was unconnected to the Connecticut primary cannot be believed.

In an era of deep public cynicism and anger about government, to be caricatured as someone who cannot give a straight answer is devastating to any candidate. The Clinton pattern has been to shade the truth, to be a little too cute, to answer questions with lawyer-like tergiversations. His seeming denial of youthful marijuana use until he was asked the precisely correct question, and then his absurd claim that he did not "inhale," have become symbolic of what's wrong with him. His subsequent assertion that his wife Hillary did not know she was being quoted when she made accusations of marital infidelity by George Bush to famed interviewer Gail Sheehy was absurd, but by then predictable.

Clinton is in deep trouble because, while proclaiming himself an agent of change, he turns out to resemble an old-fashioned pol and not a very inspiring one at that. The description of him as "Slick Willie" by Paul Greenberg, editorial-page editor of the *Pine Bluff* (Arkansas) *Commercial*, has stuck nationally. That was not the Bill Clinton I perceived in occasional, casual contact with him over the past dozen years. He came across as a slightly left-of-center Southerner who, though displaying the excessive ambition common to his profession, seemed a sensible enough fellow.

*In an era of deep public cynicism and anger about government, to be caricatured as someone who cannot give a straight answer is devastating to any candidate.*

I was aware of his background as a nationally known anti-Vietnam student activist and his subsequent work on behalf of George McGovern's presidential campaign. But he appeared to have ripened into a moderate Democrat, sharing the party's faith in activist government but also taking conservative stances on social questions.

It was this Clinton who in 1988 occupied roughly the same position that Al Gore and Richard Gephardt hold in 1992—the Democrat who should have run for President and whose allure was heightened because he did not. He appeared to loom over the Seven Dwarfs, whose number, ironically, included Gore and Gephardt.

The first sign that something might be amiss with Clinton as a candidate emerged at the 1988 Democratic convention in Atlanta, after his endless nominating speech for Michael Dukakis. His reaction to his national humiliation revealed a two-sided Clinton. First, he put out word that the fiasco had really been caused by his attempts to meet the Dukakis campaign's request that he stretch out his speech. But then he appeared, dripping charm, on the Johnny Carson program to expiate his blunder. Thus, the two sides of Clinton in the face of adversity: whining and showing true grit.

Clinton campaigned for a sixth term as governor in 1990, pledging he would serve out his four-year term. This was a run-of-the-mill political fib, for he was even then planning a presidential campaign that would put him well ahead of his competitors. Indeed, in general principles he had been thinking of this great campaign since adolescence, and his head start paid off in the short pre-primary campaign. →



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Nobody else in the field was close to him. By the time of the last "cattle show" at the Democratic state chairmen's meeting in Chicago last November, he was ahead in money, endorsements, organization, media support, poll ratings, and every other conceivable category. His carefully wrought "covenant" speeches at Georgetown left his competition in the dust.

But what did they say about the direction in which he was heading? "This New Covenant isn't liberal or conservative," he said. "It's both and it's different." It places heavy reliance on government while preaching individual responsibility. Populist rhetoric calling for the rich to be taken to account is balanced by demands of individual responsibility imposed on the ordinary citizen—even the welfare recipient. The "New Covenant," in short, is an old-fashioned political balancing act.

His success at this feat is shown by his skill in coming over as a moderate Democrat able to recapture the South and the Reagan Democrats while openly avowing governmental activism that dwarfs in its reach and depth the proposals of his supposedly more liberal competitors. He pulled off this bit of political gymnastics mainly by breaking with the party's left wing on capital punishment, parental notification on abortion, and, even more significantly, on the use of military force.

*No longer was there any talk of capital punishment, parental notification, or Desert Storm. Clinton was now unequivocally pro-choice on abortion, opposed to nuclear power, and supportive of anti-strikebreaker legislation.*

When Clinton came to Washington last September 16 to sit at one of the regular breakfasts of Washington correspondents hosted by the *Christian Science Monitor*'s Godfrey Sperling, he described himself as an unequivocal supporter of Desert Storm. Nobody bothered to check the record, and Clinton was routinely depicted in news accounts as the only Democratic presidential hopeful who had favored the Gulf War.

In reality, Clinton's record of hawkish public utterances is meager. Through the more than six months from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to the first allied bombing of Baghdad, the governor was silent. Only on January 14, 1991, two days after Congress voted the war resolution, did Clinton speak—and then in a manner so equivocal that the Associated Press and the *Arkansas Gazette*, the state's biggest newspaper, disagreed about what he meant. While Clinton clearly said he "agreed" with the two Arkansas senators who wanted to wait for sanctions to work, and the *Gazette* thought he said he would have voted no, the AP thought he said he would have voted yes. He fell silent again once the guns boomed. Clinton managed to pull off a straddle without getting himself in trouble.

His first "Slick Willie" problems as a presidential candidate derived from his efforts to run as both an outsider and an insider, to be Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale at the same time. Clinton the insider was seeking to win over congressional Democrats, including super-delegates to the national convention; Clinton the outsider was running an early television commercial in New Hampshire attacking the bipartisan, administration-backed pay raise for Congress. The 30-second spot showed Clinton declaring: "For twelve years, the politicians in Washington have raised their pay, cut taxes on the rich, and raised taxes on the middle class. In eleven years as governor, I've never had a pay raise. And as President, I'll veto pay raises in Washington until middle-class incomes are going up again."

Fudging on Desert Storm is one thing, but playing fast and loose on congressional pay caused a storm on Capitol Hill. Rep. David Obey of Wisconsin, a senior House Democrat, called Clinton a "goddamn liar" who had previously indicated his support for the salary hike. In Arkansas, the state Common Cause director, Scott Trotter, said Clinton was backing a state constitutional amendment that would increase his yearly salary as governor from $35,000 to $65,000. Clinton denied it; Trotter dismissed the denial. That marked two claims of untruth by the candidate on a single issue. The TV spot was soon pulled, and Clinton dropped the pay issue.

By that time, Clinton's campaign had run into its first serious trouble. The accusations of Gennifer Flowers had given birth to the character and credibility issues, threatening his well-planned road to the nomination.

When I arrived in New Hampshire on February 4, three weeks before the primary, I was sympathetic to Clinton's plight. He was the victim of supermarket tabloids, which were invading his past private life and subjecting him to standards not applied to previous candidates. Still, I wasn't prepared for the level of support for him from political reporters—especially the younger ones—assigned to cover Clinton. Not since my first presidential campaign—in 1960, when the touring press idolized John F. Kennedy—had I seen such a degree of rapture from the boys on the bus. When Hendrik Hertzberg wrote in the *New Republic* that every colleague he had asked in a random check on the New Hampshire campaign circuit had expressed personal support for Clinton, his small sample might have been skewed—but not by very much.

The reporters agreed with Clinton's explicit faith in the ability of government, if properly managed, to cure all worldly ills. They were awed by his command of facts and cheered by his dynamism, after the diffidence of Michael Dukakis. They were also repentant, ashamed that the establishment press had so quickly reprinted what the supermarket tabloids had published about Clinton's alleged marital infidelities. It was clear that the newspeople on the beat



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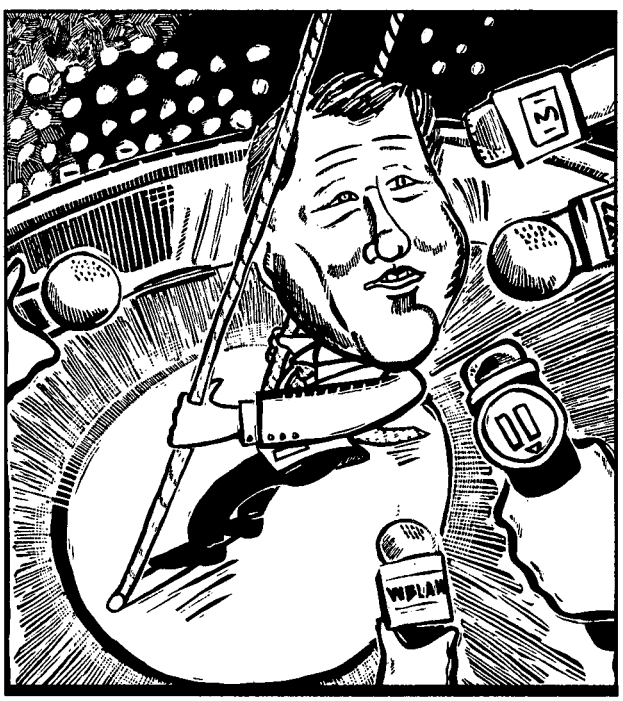
would want to clog any further pipeline from the sleaze journals, which indeed proved to be the case. With relief, the reporters noted that New Hampshire voters seemed unmoved by and uninterested in the Gennifer Flowers story, and that Clinton still led in the polls.

But then on February 6, a single newspaper story irrevocably changed the course of the 1992 presidential campaign. That day's edition of the *Wall Street Journal* contained a back-page report by Jeffrey Birnbaum detailing how Clinton in 1969 had avoided military conscription. Birnbaum skillfully blended details that had appeared in humdrum profiles of the candidate with a few new facts for a volatile mixture.

The Clinton campaign would never be the same again. Combined with doubts about the sincerity of Clinton's Gennifer Flowers denials and the start of nagging questions about the candidate's veracity on such matters as the congressional pay raise, his handling of draft avoidance elevated the character issue to new heights. The ranks of his admirers on the campaign circuit thinned. As a journalist, I began to see him with different eyes.




What Clinton did twenty-three years ago wasn't much different from what many other well-educated young men did to keep themselves out of Vietnam and a war they deplored. Although ordered to report for induction, he managed to stay on in England as a Rhodes scholar and then made plans to further delay service by signing up for the ROTC as a University of Arkansas law student. In late 1969, when President Richard Nixon began winding down the war and the draft call was radically reduced, Clinton opted out of the ROTC and returned home to go to school, not at Arkansas—which his mother says he never really meant to attend—but at Yale.

His performance as a 22-year-old, while arguably deficient in such traditional values as patriotism and duty, broke no laws and indeed might be considered commendable by his peers. Clinton widened his credibility gap not by what he did in 1969, but by what he said in 1992.

He might have closed the book then and there on February 6 by conceding he had done all in his power, within the limits of law and ethics, to avoid service. But the same impulse that two months later led him to stretch credulity over why he wanted to build more Seawolf submarines compelled him to put what he had done in the best possible light.

That morning, reporters lay in wait for Clinton in the lobby of the Tara Hotel in Nashua, where he was to address a meeting of social workers. His aides had prepared a bum's rush to get him through the gauntlet, but Clinton likes to face adversity and stopped to answer, with a smile and with no bad humor, every question asked him. His cooperation dug him a deep grave.

He explained he had pulled out of his long-term ROTC commitment and "opened myself up to the draft" because of a cry of conscience caused by the death in Vietnam of contemporaries from his hometown in Arkansas. In that crowded hotel lobby, I asked him if he had not known of the Pentagon announcement of September 19, 1969, curtailing draft calls. "I didn't know that," he replied.

But that announcement had set off parties of rejoicing across America, and surely must have reached the ears of the worried young Rhodes scholars across the ocean. As more information was divulged piece by piece in the days and weeks to come, Clinton's account suffered. It soon emerged that Clinton's remarkable December 3, 1969, letter to his ROTC colonel in Arkansas thanking him "for saving me from the draft" was not written until after Clinton had been given a very high lottery number that precluded his conscription (though he also denies being aware of this).

Perhaps the most important thing about that letter is what it did not contain. Never once did he mention his concern, expressed twenty-three years later, for his young friends killed in the war, which he surely would have highlighted in his obvious desire to make Col. Eugene Holmes think better of him for pulling out of the program.

Not until Saturday night, April 4, on the weekend before the New York primary, did Clinton acknowledge that he had received a draft induction notice in the spring of 1969, more than three months before he joined the ROTC. But this revelation, forced by a former friend's disclosure, was quickly passed over by reporters eager to be done with the draft question.

On the evening of February 6, obviously shaken by his buffeting over the draft and the Gennifer Flowers controversy, Clinton addressed a "town meeting" (New Englandese for a political rally) at Phillips Exeter Academy. Instead of his usual impromptu stump speech, he delivered an eleven-page prepared address that marked a second turning point in his campaign. While the question of military service underlined doubts about his credibility, the Phillips Exeter speech undermined faith in his constancy. →



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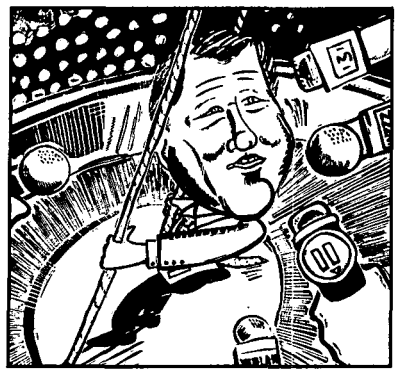

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Having clearly established himself as the "moderate" candidate, Clinton was now navigating a turn to the left to pick up the mainstream of Democratic primary voters. No longer was there any talk of capital punishment, parental notification, or Desert Storm. He was now unequivocally pro-choice on abortion, opposed to nuclear power, and supportive of anti-strikebreaker legislation. When asked about right-to-work legislation, Clinton managed to give the impression that, while it might be all right for Arkansas, it was certainly not for New Hampshire.

After this point, the image of the good-natured, sensible candidate from Little Rock changed perceptibly. As his poll ratings fell and negatives rose, he reacted with the same combination seen after his 1988 fiasco in Atlanta: whining and grit. While moaning that the Republicans and the news media were persecuting him, he battled with a tenacity that even his severest critics had to admire.

From that day onward, he played the Walter Mondale insider's game ever more relentlessly, flinching at no pandering to pin down the nomination. Pushing for the Seawolf was perhaps the most blatant example, but I was also intrigued by his performance at the United Auto Workers Local 458 hall in Saginaw, Michigan, the day before the Michigan primary. He claimed he had an "automotive plan" that would enable Detroit's Big Three to defeat their Japanese competitors, a revelation that generated only subdued applause from the friendly audience. When I asked a Clinton aide about the plan, he seemed a bit puzzled, but recovered to say he assumed the candidate was talking about his overall economic strategy for reviving American industry. There might be some such specific save-Detroit plan hidden away in a volume of Clinton's campaign documents, but I have yet to locate it.

When a battered Clinton retired to Little Rock to recover his voice and reorganize his strategy after his New York triumph, he again had to consider delivering a "Checkers speech" in which he would admit error and promise to do better. According to the nearly unanimous advice he received, however, doing so would be a disaster, reopening the autopsy into his character and credibility.

The consensus is that Clinton must be "presidential," talking about issues instead of himself. His advisers hope that just as the reporters covering him have since New Hampshire ignored all accusations of marital infidelity, their guilty consciences will now cause them to put a lid on the character issue generally. Given that the news media have also lost interest in the questions surrounding Clinton's avoidance of military service, it's a strategy that could work in the short run.

The bigger problem is Clinton himself. His vigor and intelligence are undercut by a lack of discipline that always leads him to seek the easy way out. His handlers might want to ponder what this failing will mean for their man over the long haul. ❒

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Michael Ledeen

# Common Sense 1992

*Worldwide, the people are saying no to Big Government in a revolution that remains leaderless.*

The natives are restless. From Marseilles and Milan to Moscow and Manhattan, in national and regional elections, state primaries, and caucuses, and in the most sophisticated polling data, a single theme resonates: Down with the politicians! True, this healthy scream of anarchism has long been with us, but, from the rise of fascism until the fall of the Soviet empire, the gusher of rage at bad government was plugged by the healthy fear of totalitarianism, and elections in the Free World were constrained by the knowledge that weak governments might not be able to resist an even greater evil. Now, in the first truly free elections since the late 1930s, the people of the West are telling their governors that they have had enough. The external threat having collapsed, the people are ready to reclaim control over their destiny.

This global phenomenon has been badly described and poorly understood. Americans in primary after primary are saying "none of the above" to all the candidates of the established parties, and such excitement as exists is limited to a short billionaire from Texas. British voters punished the Conservatives, but refused to permit Labour to form a new government. The Germans kicked sand in the faces of both major parties. The French spat in the face of the Socialists, but without embracing the old men of the right. The Italians savaged all their parties. Scores of movements have emerged in Europe, on all bands of the political spectrum, the only thing linking their striking success being their denunciation of politicians and bureaucrats. Our own polls show that the American people don't trust government to solve real problems, and bitterly resent the amount of money it takes from them.

The Italians describe government as *lo stato ladro*—the thief-state. But what do the people want in its place? The answer seems tricky: while voters have lost confidence in government and wish to withhold their money from it, they also want many of the things that government currently provides. There's less to this apparent contradiction than meets the eye: indeed, it is entirely reasonable to demand better services and less government. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the only hope for improved government lies in reducing both the numbers of public employees and the amount of money they get to spend. Peoples east and west understand this seeming paradox, which is why they are demanding greater freedom to solve problems themselves. They want institutions over which they can exercise greater control: institutions that are smaller, leaner, and more efficient. That means a greater reliance

*Michael Ledeen is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.*



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on the private sector and on local government than on national bureaucracies that are politically and geographically remote from the great mass of the citizenry. "Taxation without representation is tyranny" was a call for democratic self-government in the eighteenth century, and it remains so today.

The democratic revolution has already smashed most of the old anti-democratic regimes and their empires, but it did not stop there. For this revolution is not simply a demand to replace one political system with another; it is also about accountability and responsiveness. The democratic revolution is therefore also threatening the old nation-states that no longer respond to the needs and desires of their peoples. Today, Bosnia and Hercegovina, tomorrow Quebec and Scotland. Today, Ukraine and the Basque country, tomorrow Cabinda and Gibraltar. One fine day, we will wake up and find the Alaskans demanding greater autonomy.

The established classes dismiss this revolutionary impulse as a protest against a particular set of policies or politicians, or against corruption, and not a primal scream for freedom from government as such. So it is that we hear the chant that "there is a role for government," as if it were merely a matter of program and personality. Desperate to maintain their power and privilege, the old rulers now seek to capture the revolutionary movement by calling for "reform." But their so-called reforms can only offer more of the same. Instead of smaller government and more freedom and democracy, they propose ever larger units and Pharaonic bureaucracies. Whether calling for a "new Europe," run by governmental professionals in Brussels and Bonn, or a U.N.-sponsored "new world order," they offer only more misgovernment-as-usual.

In one of the paradoxes that characterize revolutionary moments, the German national bank—the very symbol of the "new Europe"—is now systematically sinking the Good Ship Europa. In its latest annual report, the Bundesbank has announced that the policies of the Kohl government will not do, and must be changed, in such a way as to make the monetary unification of Europe impossible. This well suits the British—who had expressed reservations even while signing the doomed Maastricht Treaty—as well as others, like the Italians, who never had the courage to give public voice to their private terror at the consequences of turning their economic future over to the Germans. Maastricht, which was to have been the prelude to a new European symphony, will instead prove to have been the swan song of the old order.

"Reform" will not suffice. We need the real thing: revolution, the whole nine yards, root and branch. Government must be slashed down to size, its gluttonous tentacles torn out of the body of society, its insidious poisons purged from the lifeblood of enterprise and education, its mindless bureaucrats blown away from their telephones and fax machines, its presses stopped, its linen washed, its babies and bathwater thrown out together in a great tidal wave of purifying destruction.

The people know this. They have expressed it in the best way available to them, by telling their politicians, in government and out, to go to hell. They have not yet coalesced behind a leader and a program because no leader has come forward with a program that embraces the revolutionary imperatives of the moment. Our task is to provide a serviceable road map to a freer world. And we Americans, who first gave the world a workable model of democratic revolution in the eighteenth century, must again serve as the beacon to the nations.

*Government must be slashed down to size, its gluttonous tentacles torn out of the body of society, its insidious poisons purged from the lifeblood of enterprise and education. . . .*

The first order of business is to break the grip of the professionals on our political system, to return to the Washingtonian ideal of the citizen-politician who serves for a time, and then goes home to tend a farm, or prepare cookies and tea, the better to raise and educate children. For these are the highest callings in a civil society.

Thus, we must insist upon term limitations for all officials, whether elected or appointed. Tenure corrupts, whether in the academy or in the government, at all levels. The only solution is to institutionalize the purge. To paraphrase Jefferson, the tree of liberty grows best when sprinkled regularly with the blood of bureaucrats and politicians. For all elected officials, and for all appointees down at least to the level of assistant secretary, after a given period of time (eight years for members of Congress, two terms for senators, and eight years—two presidential terms—for appointees), *out of government.*

No citizen can be above the law, and therefore all laws pertaining to government officials must apply to officials of all branches. That means the Freedom of Information Act must apply to Congress—or be scrapped. Ditto the Special Prosecutor, as in Judge Lawrence "Torquemada" Walsh. Nothing will more quickly undo some of the outrageous bits of legislation than making legislators subject to their provisions. As of now, Congress is exempt from everything from the normal requirements of everyday banking to the Ethics in Government Act. And (my particular favorite) members of Congress should be held accountable for their public statements, and therefore liable for libel suits. At present, they can slander anyone and can't be sued.

Of course, we need a professional civil service, but a small one, and the bureaucracy must be drastically reduced. First, randomly choose half the bureaucrats, and inform them



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that their services are no longer required. To ensure a relatively painless transition, each ex-bureaucrat will be guaranteed full salary (complete with step increases) until retirement age, and the pension he would have received had he continued in his job. If he chooses to work—most will, given the Calvinistic angst that drives most Americans—and takes a job that pays less than his government post, he is paid the difference. If he earns more, then he receives nothing until retirement age, at which point the pension kicks in.

I doubt that this is an extravagance. Years ago, in Italy, it was calculated that the nation would save many billions of dollars by paying the public sector *not* to work, and I have no doubt that the same would occur here. For many of the problems of bureaucracy derive from its size, which makes it simultaneously slow and non-accountable. Bureaucrats in a halved government will be unable to hide in their endless committees, and will be forced to focus their activities, and explain their actions.

It is not only the bureaucracy of the executive branch that must be reduced, but also the legislative staff. Our elected representatives will complain that it will be impossible for them to deal with all the issues currently before them—and that's exactly the point. They are meddling in too many areas of life; we want them to direct their attention to the essentials.

Then we must shut down various government operations, from the Department of Education to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Education should be in the hands of communities, not Washington. Whatever can be accomplished by the Education Department can be done better and cheaper close to home, and we must encourage competition in education by giving parents real choice. Vouchers will encourage the growth of high-quality private education. If some public schools prove unequal to this challenge, close them down. We want quality education at all costs, not public education at the highest cost. As for "public" broadcasting, any such organization will inevitably be politicized, and become the plaything of the Washington establishment. All broadcasting should be competitive and privately owned. If those currently feeding at the trough of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting can't make it in a world of hundreds of television and radio frequencies, they should seek employment in a different field.

All such proposals provoke outrage among the political and intellectual classes, because these people do not believe in the marketplace. They still believe in the virtues of central planning, despite its monumental failure worldwide. Consider the intellectual vogue of Japan. Up until a few weeks ago, Japan was treated as a clear example of American failure, and the virtues of long-term planning. To be sure, the planning mechanism was housed in a mixed


PERFIDIOUS ALBION

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*by* William McGurn *foreword by* William F. Buckley, Jr.

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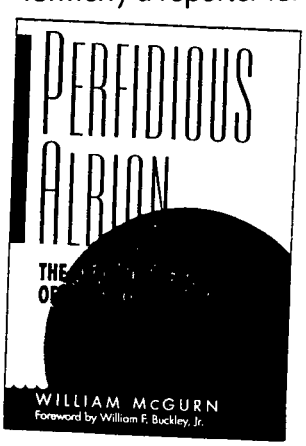


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public-private cartel by the name of MITI, but, whatever its name, it was the Japanese version of the Soviet Gosplan. And like the Gosplan, it proved once again that central planning can be fatal to even the strongest economy. When the Japanese stock and real-estate markets crashed and burned, our intellectuals—who had warned of the imminent Japanese conquest of the entire economic universe—warned darkly of the terrible consequences for the American economy. But the Japanese crash—like the parallel German crisis—is good for us, because it once again demonstrates the superiority of free markets over planned economies.

It is by now accepted that democracy is not only the best system of government, but the best guarantee of international tranquility. As the leading democracy in the world, we should spearhead the democratic revolution. This requires not only the right values, but real economic and military power. Do not believe that the world is turning toward democracy merely because everyone has suddenly seen the light. The democratic revolution is due, at least in part, to our victory in the Cold War. The Soviet Empire was not only an economic and social failure; we defeated it and its surrogates on several military battlefields, from Grenada and Angola to Afghanistan and Nicaragua. On other battlefields—most dramatically in the Middle East—our allies, fighting with our weapons, defeated Soviet allies fighting with theirs. When Israel demolished the Syrian air force over Lebanon, it was a triumph of American military might. And the world took notice of our military prowess—and will to use it—in Panama and Kuwait. Political power does not come exclusively from the barrels of guns, but if your political enemies have bigger guns than you, you will be at a considerable political disadvantage.

It is symptomatic of the confusion of the established classes that, when policy planners in the Pentagon reiterated this self-evident principle of foreign policy, it was assailed as if it had come from *Mein Kampf*. Indeed, liberal America-bashers have long regretted our military might, considering it unclean. But if we are serious about supporting the democratic revolution, we must be strong enough to frighten the enemies of democracy. Having achieved a major technological breakthrough in military power, we should lock in our advantage. Ten, a hundred, a thousand Stealth aircraft! And we must continue to develop new technologies, and do our best to keep them out of the hands of our enemies and commercial competitors. We want to win the next war as easily as we won the last.

Paradoxically, the task of freedom is facilitated by the mediocrity of our leaders. In times of great statesmen, it is hard to demand a reduction in government power, for we want great leaders to have maximum opportunity for innovation and accomplishment. But today, with lackluster figures in virtually every Western capital, we need not hesitate. Can we not do better than these feeble reeds? We can indeed. But we must not be confused about our goal. It is not a matter of taking over the levers of power; the levers must be smashed, and the power dispersed. The iron law of bureaucracy must be revoked, and the spirit of enterprise must flow through the free world.

Although the chances are good, there is no guarantee of success, for the enemies of freedom are many, and their allure is considerable. In Moscow, the old guard is back, and has taken Yeltsin hostage. He himself signed a decree imposing a "30-year rule" on the Archives of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. This means, in practice, that we will not see anything that has anything to do with "national security" after 1961, and we will see nothing at all after 1981. Soviet history will remain a riddle in a mystery inside an enigma until the revolutionaries rise again to man the bureaucracies. In Romania, the battle still rages in the streets. In China the murderous gerontocracy rules unchallenged. Even Fidel hangs on. Our current leaders cannot inspire this movement, for they are managers, not revolutionaries. What should have been Thatcher's and Reagan's moment of triumph is being treated as a damage-control problem by their successors. So it is up to us to drive our countries along the right path. It is only fitting that this latest chapter in the endless struggle against evil be conducted *despite* our leaders. ❐



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Thomas Mallon

# Why, O Why, O Why O, Do They Ever Leave Owosso?

*In a small Michigan town, the Curwood Festival welcomes summer each June.*

On a Tuesday night more than forty years ago the town of Owosso, Michigan, had a date with history, and history stood her up. As the boyhood home of Thomas E. Dewey, Owosso was supposed to take her place between Independence, Missouri, and Abilene, Kansas, in the line of smalltown mothers of Presidents, a spot she ended up being accorded for just a brief, false moment on the pages of the *Chicago Tribune*.

The dowry she had ready was the sort of plain prosperous real estate required by the role. Tom Dewey had been born in 1902 above his grandfather's general store on Main Street, on the west bank of the Shiawassee River. The apartment, though marked, is now boarded up, and a bird sits cheeping on the ledge above the deserted commercial floor last occupied by a furniture store that couldn't quite make it. Dewey's father, an editor, fared more successfully, and "our Tom," as another marker several blocks away calls him, would do most of his growing up in a big frame house on prosperous West Oliver Street, which, like most of Owosso, could serve as the location for a remake of any Andy Hardy movie. Lined with porch-fronted homes and Protestant churches, the street still belongs to life, not history. The big Dewey house is privately occupied; on a June afternoon in 1991 some girls are splashing in the backyard pool behind it. A few blocks down, the Methodists are planning tonight's Swiss Steak Supper, and thanks to the Baptist Harry S. Truman, nobody coming to it will have to fight for a parking spot with any tourist: whatever cars are riding westward into town, past the corn and soybean fields between Flint and Owosso, will be heading toward something other than the presidential library that never got built. No, the only library in town is the Owosso Public, a sturdy brick affair built with Carnegie money and opened in 1914, and the framed old Bachrach portrait that hangs inside on the second floor is not of Thomas E. Dewey at all, but of the town's ruling favorite son and local hero: James Oliver Curwood (1878-1927). →

*Thomas Mallon's novel* Aurora 7 *is now available in paperback from W. W. Norton.*



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He was not pressed into service as a substitute. While Dewey was still a student at Owosso High, Curwood's adventure novels—many of them set in the Canadian wilderness with titles like *The Gold Hunters* (1909) and *God's Country and the Woman* (1915)—were making him rich and famous, putting him in possession of a readership and sales figures comparable to Zane Grey's. After Dewey went off to trap the sharks and slugs of the New York underworld, he was more or less gone for good, but Curwood loved coming home from his northern encounters with wolves and bears to write his stories in Owosso: "I think it is the nicest place in the world. I was born there and I hope to die there. It's American and it makes you feel at home."

Many of his thirty-three books were turned into hasty movies, some by his own production company. Recently, however, *The Grizzly King* (1916) was filmed, with some seriousness and distinction, as *The Bear,* by Jean-Jacques Annaud, the director of *Quest for Fire.* In the fall of 1989 the movie had its American premiere in Owosso, making Curwood's hometown feel a little as Atlanta did when David O. Selznick unveiled *Gone With the Wind* at the Loew's Grand on Peachtree Street.

*The Bear* is eager to be both entertainment and art (a friend describes it as "Disney meets German expressionism"), and, in fact, just as Selznick's achievement far surpassed Margaret Mitchell's, Annaud's rises way above and beyond the nicely realized moral yarn that is Curwood's novel. *The Grizzly King* was a kind of tract, the result of a conversion its author underwent when he was shown mercy by a bear ("Thor" in the novel) that he had just before wounded. He came to realize that

> the greatest thrill of the hunt is not in killing, but in letting live. It is true that in the great open spaces one must kill to live; one must have meat, and meat is life. But killing for food is not the lust of slaughter; it is not the lust which always recalls to me that day in the British Columbia mountains when, in less than two hours, I killed four grizzlies on a mountain slide—a destruction of possibly a hundred and twenty years of life in a hundred and twenty minutes. And that is only one instance of many in which I now regard myself as having been almost a criminal—for killing for the excitement of killing can be little less than murder.

So heartfelt and clear-minded was his recantation that the indiscriminate hunter wound up becoming Chairman of the Game, Fish and Wildlife Committee of the Michigan Department of Conservation.

Even if one can follow some of the novel's diction (like "cayuse" and "hobble") only by remembering certain lyrics of Cole Porter (another small-town boy), one can't help being affected by *The Grizzly King,* just as one can't help being charmed by Curwood Castle, the folly the author built right in town beside a stretch of the Shiawassee flowing between the two Dewey homes. He used it as a writing studio and a place for entertaining movie people and foreign visitors: all over its main room you can still find the holders needed for displaying their flags.

"She looks a bit like Myrna Loy, doesn't she?" says the woman greeting tourists. She doesn't know who the lookalike in the painting actually is, but the canvases on the castle walls depict scenes from Curwood books made into movies. Going up a winding stair to one of the turrets, you find the author's big, black L. C. Smith & Bros. typewriter, and one more turn above that brings you to a circular wall full of display cases containing an assortment of translations, movie posters, and family photographs, including one of Curwood's second wife, Ethel M. Greenwood, who was every bit as pretty as Myrna Loy. The only item to interest some teenagers wandering through is the author's driver's license, set out with some other personal effects.

*As the boyhood home of Thomas E. Dewey, Owosso was supposed to take her place between Independence, Missouri, and Abilene, Kansas, in the line of smalltown mothers of Presidents, a spot she ended up being accorded for just a brief, false moment on the pages of the* Chicago Tribune.

"If he was that famous," says one visitor to another, "how come the whole time we grew up in Holly, we didn't hear about him?" They may have forgotten James Oliver Curwood in Holly, Michigan, but when he prematurely departed this world from Owosso, an extra edition of the *Argus-Press* for August 14, 1927, ran a headline so wide that the editors had to resort to periphrasis to get it across eight columns. JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD'S ILLNESS FATAL is the curiously indirect news that Owossoans got. Curwood had been sick with a streptococcal infection for just ten days.

The basement of the castle provides space for the Shiawassee County Genealogical Society and the Owosso Historical Commission, and in a little room tenanted by the latter, one can find Ivan A. Conger, the local historian who has worked mightily to keep Curwood's name and books circulating. There's a little exhibit devoted to Dewey down here, too: old *Life* magazines with the candidate on the cover; a letter on the stationery of the Owosso Dewey for President Club; and an old campaign button touting the contender and his running mate, that Californian chosen to balance the ticket, Earl Warren. But it is a small display, and it isn't even permanent. By contrast, James Oliver Curwood will be celebrated this weekend (June 7-9) with square dances, hamburger-eating contests, raft races, brass bands, and a parade expected to attract 100,000 people.



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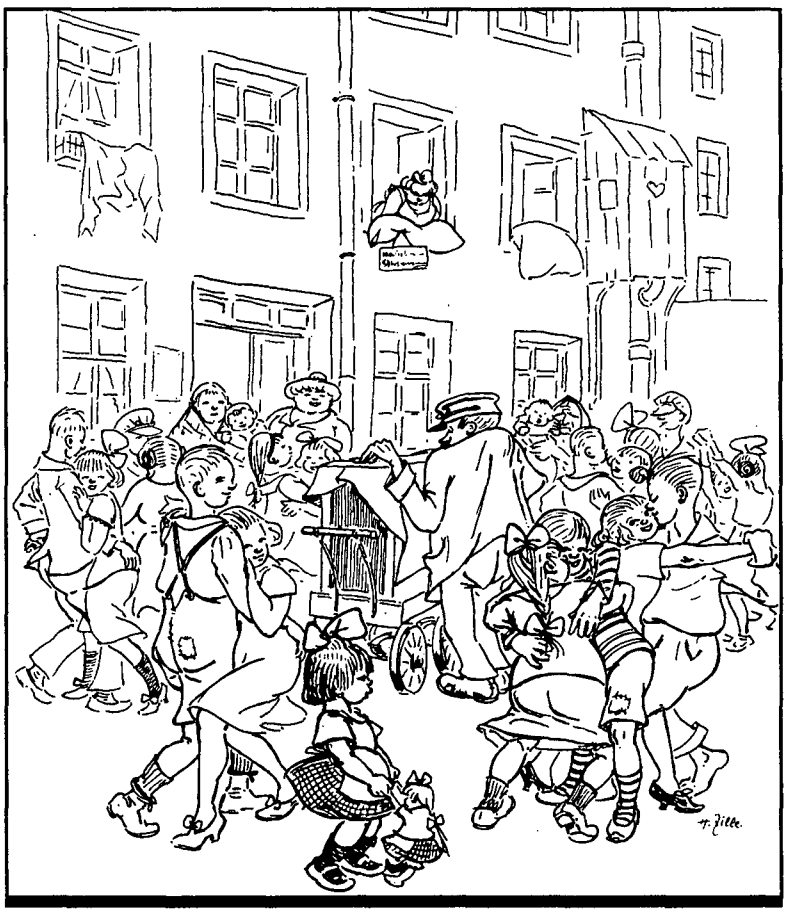
The Curwood Festival gets off to a small but determined start at noon on Friday. Splendid in their blue-and-gold uniforms, the Owosso High School marching band makes its peppy way over the swaying Heritage Footbridge that crosses the Shiawassee to the castle, where they play "The Star-Spangled Banner" as members of the local VFW post raise the flag. It's a weekday, and most folks, auto-industry recession or not, are working, so the number of red-and-white-shirted festival organizers almost matches the number of spectators. Mayor Christine Mitchell, who looks like a Century 21 representative, declares that this year's festival will be a continuation of the celebration the town has been having for the return of two local guard units from the Persian Gulf. One of them, the 146th, got back to the States only last Friday, arriving in Owosso, via Philadelphia and a fort in Wisconsin, for a Tuesday-night parade. Mayor Mitchell thanks the marching band for being there on Tuesday, just as they'd been there in the January cold to see the troops off. Now that the soldiers are back home, she tells everyone to have a "fantastic" time, hitting each short vowel with a friendly Midwestern buzzsaw.



The Curwood Queen, young Rachel Rodriguez, and her court are introduced. Poised, pretty Rachel thanks God for blessing Owosso with such a beautiful day and urges that the crowd "please don't hesitate to ask my court members or myself" any questions about the festival activities. (Rachel is going to make a *great* Century 21 rep.) Next it's the turn of the 1990 Grand Marshal to bring on his successor, a public school teacher and small businessman and former state legislator, during whose remarks one of the girls in the band, which has been standing at attention in the sun, quietly faints. The theme of this year's parade honoring the ecology-minded Curwood is "Trees—Guardians of the Earth," and the girl is led off and revived under one of the very environmental wonders that has made Owosso, in the words of a festival pamphlet, "the Bright Spot That's a Shade Better."

A woman down at the local Chamber of Commerce will joke about Ivan Conger's inclination toward prolixity, and he does hold the microphone in front of the castle longer than any of the other speakers this noon. Standing there with his crewcut and string tie, the local historian marvels over how in 1977 the festival organizers were planning just a modest one-time centenary for Curwood. "Now, as we roll on year after year, we must not forget James Oliver Curwood as we continue to have fun at each Curwood Festival. We must keep his memory alive and ever before us in every way that we can." He recalls the famous 1915 encounter with Thor that left Curwood "a new man," and refers proudly to "Jean-Jacques," the French director who said his trip to Owosso for *The Bear's* premiere was the highlight of his American stay.

Recalling Curwood's efforts to clean up the polluted Shiawassee, Conger quotes his renunciation of the "overlords of business," to whom no natural beauty is sacred, and one thinks that the silent assent by this gathering of Rotarians and boosters is something the Republican National Committee might be interested to note. He ends by reciting the Curwood credo: "Nature is my religion. It is my desire and my ambition to take my readers with me into the heart of this nature. I love it and I feel that they must love it, if only I can get the two acquainted."

The band strikes up the Owosso High School fight song, and when the little crowd has finished clapping along, it disperses to put the finishing touches on the activities that will be in full swing by tomorrow. The chubby kid in the "Alf" T-shirt rises from the grass; one red-shirted woman tells another, "I got a float to get up and ready"; two VFW members make plans for taking care of the flag over the weekend; and a group of women arrange to be at the Hardee's on Main Street by 6:30 tonight. The sound of hammers, and an occasional train whistle, float across the sunshine on a breeze.

Of course, the Curwood Festival does not live and grow from year to year on pure devotion to conservation and literature. Like Christmas and the Fourth of July, James Oliver Curwood is good for business. In fact, so mindful is Owosso of what this weekend brings in that



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the organizers inflict a good-natured insult on those vendors who are taking money out. Carpetbaggers Row is the name for the parking lot where they sell the same paraphernalia they'll be selling this summer at another dozen fairs in another dozen venues: shirts (heavy metal and Desert Storm), leather knife holders, Jesus buttons, pewter Garfields. The only remarkable thing about all this generic stuff, if you're used to seeing it on urban avenues, is the lack of litter that gathers around it by the end of the day: throwing a candied-apple's wrapper into a wastebasket seems to come as naturally to an Owossoan as spitting on the sidewalk does to midtown Manhattanites.

The midway, going strong by early evening, has its nondescript aspect, too, with name-brand Skee-ball booths and "NASA" rides with ominous disclaimers for the pregnant and back-injured—warnings put up not to attract thrill-seeking business, as such signs tried to years ago, but only to stave off lawsuits. The sound of baseballs hitting the tin backboard behind stubbornly upright beer bottles is now produced at 67 cents a pop (three throws for $2), but it still timelessly rides the air with smells of frying food and caramel corn. The barkers in their pink shirts have the kind of anger that proceeds from boredom, and they throw themselves into their work with a surly aggression, with out-of-town faces that can almost make you see them representing leering, luring evil—the seducers in some long-ago Sherwood Anderson story.

*Republican Congressman Dave Camp, who looks like a college student-body president, elects to run beside his car, as if doing roadwork, waving and tacking toward both sidewalks, shaking hands and performing with a manic quality that makes George Bush look like Calvin Coolidge. He generates a polite, and complete, lack of crowd interest.*

But all these franchised operations in the open spaces near City Hall are really exceptions to the one-of-a-kind, authentically Owossoan nature of the Curwood Festival. Its essence can be found, if you're looking for it early on Friday evening, at the new outdoor amphitheater behind the junior high school. Across the other side of the Shiawassee from the castle, it's really just a big outdoor stage with a homage-giving turret motif to its roof. On the lawn in front of it at 6:30 p.m. are spectators ready for a round of the "Mr. Owosso" contest, which is a matter not of beefcake, but of cheerful charity; it is, in fact, one of the festival's big deals. For weeks, each contestant has been representing a worthy local cause and his "campaigners," now working the crowd in identifying shirts, have been collecting donations for the candidate's particular charity. The lighthearted premise tonight is that you'll put money into the cans and mayonnaise jars in proportion to the talents displayed on stage by each of the three finalists and his backup men.

Gale Burke and his beer-bellied group, representing a local hospice, do a lip-synched version of "Sea Cruise" complete with chorus-line kicks. By eschewing the esoteric, they prove altogether more crowd-pleasing than Jeff Smelser and his men, who let down the Handicapped Children's Foundation with a drag version of "Send in the Clowns" that somehow segues into an unknown rock number. The Association for Retarded Citizens of Shiawassee County is much better served by Tom Thon and his guys, who do an M. C. Hammer number ("U Can't Touch This") with as many acrobatics as a small group of overweight white boys can manage.

The big announcement of the winner will come tomorrow night on the midway, in the Happy Hunting Grounds (i.e., the beer tent), and Cheryl Gapinski returns to the mike after "U Can't Touch This" to remind everyone to be there. Meanwhile, they should enjoy this first day of the festival, because "it's a beautiful night in Owosso."

It is, too, although it falls slowly. Here on the western edge of the eastern time zone, plenty of golden light will last well past 9 p.m.—more than enough for the Kids in Curwood Country Parade, a sort of small-scale preview of tomorrow's. By quarter to eight, it's coming down East Oliver Street (where the "School Slow" sign still features a boy in short pants and a cap, not those bubble-headed spacechildren in the modern version), a few blocks down from the Deweys' old house. There are teeny twirlers and the Owosso 6th Grade Band; Brownie troop 538 and Cub Scout Pack 78. "HI, JOSH!" scream some girls bent on mortifying a passing, marching Scout. Carrie Senk, the Curwood Princess, comes by on a red convertible with her two-girl court, and you look at her on this lovely June night knowing that three-quarters of a century from now, long after this evening has passed out of everyone's memory, it won't be entirely gone from hers. Antique cars glide by every few minutes, and a wine-colored '41 Ford holds the 1991 Beautiful Baby Grand Prize winners, two little blond toddlers, a boy and girl, waving in a somewhat nauseating pre-professional way. And then more than a score of unbelievably orderly dogs are permitted to promenade on leashes.

The parade provides an opportunity not only for parental photography ("Yeah, we're next one coming up," says a young wife to her videotaping husband), but for parental propaganda as well. The floats and banners bear mildly improving injunctions that the kids are made to endorse as the price of their brief celebrity. Even the American Legion's gone eco-happy: the children of its Junior Auxiliary carry tree-shaped sandwich signs saying (front) "Plant a Tree and . . ." (back) "Let It Grow With Me." Members of the Little Rascals 4-H Club appear to have been tricked. What was no doubt proposed to them as



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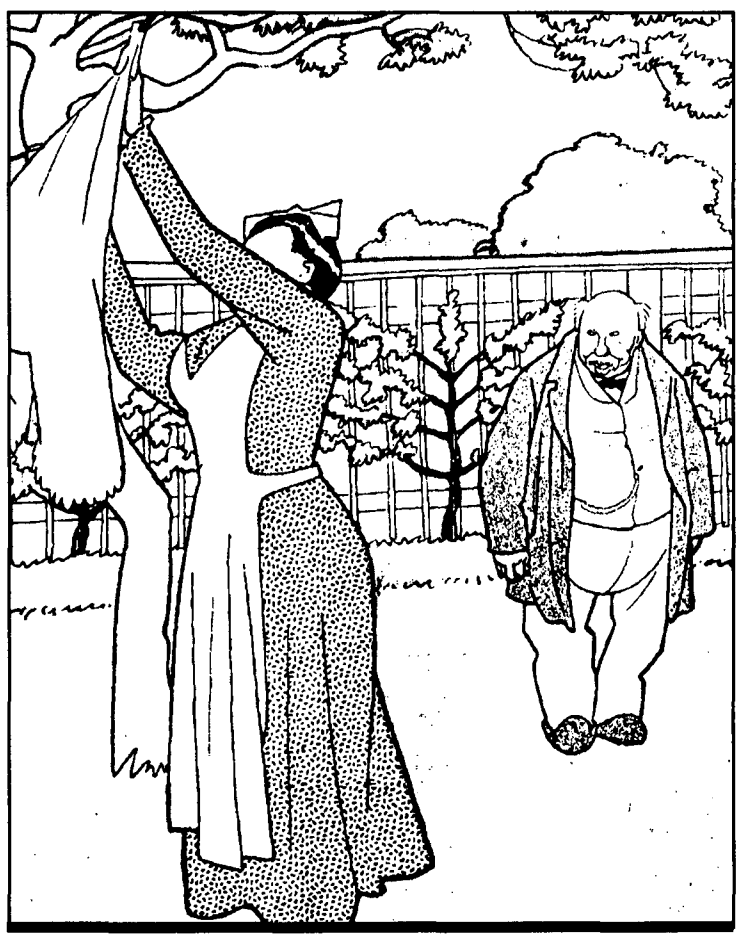
a contribution to environmentalism is really a domestic pacification program: the big paper hands they hold up while riding their tractor-pulled farm wagon say not just "Don't Litter" but also "Turn Off the TV."

Owosso is, if ever the saying was true, a good place to raise children. Here you can overhear boys on their bicycles talking about sliders and fastballs ("I started smashin' 'em in there so hard he started cryin'. Nobody could hit 'em"), perhaps on their way down to Ken's Coin Corner on Main Street for some Desert Storm Trading Cards. But this is 1991, of course, and the world of the Bundys—Al and Ted—keeps leaking into the Shiawassee valley. Down near the midway you can find teenaged girls wearing "I LOVE MY BAD ASS ATTITUDE" T-shirts as well as a contented family whose mom's upper-body message to the world is "COWBOYS ARE BAD LOVERS BECAUSE THEY THINK 8 SECONDS IS A GOOD RIDE." And if you want to gaze at Mr. Curwood's little castle, sit down on a wooden railing near the Heritage Footbridge on the east side of the river: you'll find yourself near some recent graffiti poetry signed by "Arnold D. Hallock '91":

*A sovereign soul: despised*
*Creation damned, psychotic,*
*American dream: demised,*
*Assassin embryonic,*

*Through the sniper's scope I see.*
*This intruder oligarch,*
*The "perfect" society,*
*Pray, my bullet finds its mark . . .*



Perhaps, after all these years, Owosso will put itself on the map not by sending a President to Washington but by taking one out.

Both the T-shirts and Arnold D. Hallock are unlikely to do much harm, but the fact is that we've got trouble, right here in River City, and that starts with T and that rhymes with D and that stands for drugs. No more so than in any other place, of course, but the admonitions in tomorrow's grown-up parade will be noticeably stronger than the ones in tonight's. After a day or two in town you feel the subject is never very far from the parental mind, and whenever you think you've stumbled into Grover's Corners, you can just go and buy a soda at the PACE booth (Positive Alternatives through Counseling and Education) behind the Armory. Fifteen percent of its Coke-selling operation goes to the festival, and the other eighty-five toward combatting "substance abuse" in the county. The PACE banner displays a sunburst-shaped panoply of co-dependencies and clienteles:

DEPRESSION, EATING DISORDERS, EMOTIONS, ABUSE, WELLNESS, STRESS, COMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS, FAMILIES, PARENTING, STUDENT PROBLEMS, CHILDREN, TEENS, SENIORS, ADDICTIONS, BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS, ADULTS.

As another graffitist working close to Arnold D. Hallock wrote: "No matter where you go, there you are." Look over toward City Hall and see the Ferris wheel prettily dripping its riders and cars through the twilight. Are they going faster than you thought they were an hour ago?

"You must have been in the army," says a man in line to the probable–World War II veteran griddling row after row of perfect flapjacks at the Rotary's breakfast in the Owosso Junior High cafeteria. A man behind a piano draped with the blue-and-gold school banner is banging out "Mona Lisa," "Glow Worm," and a baffling near-ragtime version of "Misty." It's Saturday morning, and this will be the festival's big day, so folks are stoking up. Most take three pancakes to start with (cholesterol-conscious seniors can pass up sausages in favor of a fruit cup), and a small corps of efficient young club members is quick to come around with seconds. People are not typically slender in these parts, and the skinny ones seem somehow seedy. This country may not have known what to do with the Kurds, but you're reminded once more of how it can feed them and anybody else in a jiffy.

Whether or not you wanted sausage, you're sure to be interested in the African Guinea Forest Hog. There's one of those, named Arnold, just outside in one of the pens set up on the school's front lawn. There are also some Tennessee goats with startled expressions, a six-year-old Royal Palm turkey, a Jacob 4-Horn sheep named Ramses, and some unexotic ducks and bunnies. There are no two-headed calves or freakish fauna of any kind, and when the fes-



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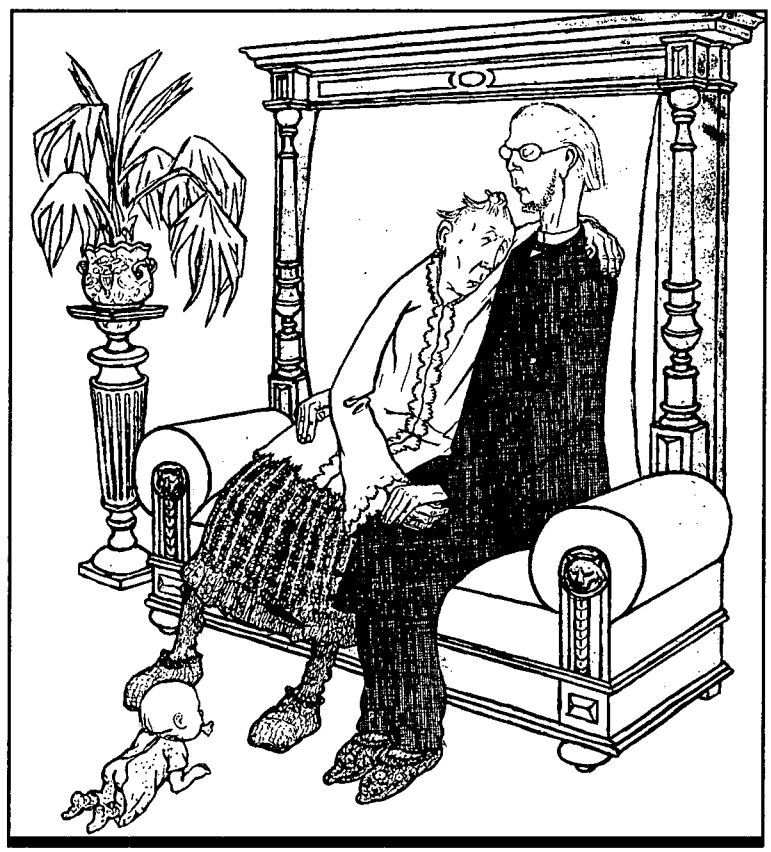
tival advertises a Little People's Place, it's talking not about midgets but the spot where pre-schoolers can finger-paint. Actually, the Curwood Dog Contest has drifted perilously close to political correctness. From the amphitheater stage, a woman explaining the Ugliest Dog event detects a murmur of disapproval and asks, a little apologetically: "Is that controversial?" Size—biggest and smallest—is a more acceptable bone of contention, and the competing dogs parade around squares marked off with the yellow tape that in other towns usually indicates a homicide scene. In the Smallest Dog contest, little kids carry puppies in their arms and a couple of local women, clearly not apartment-dwellers, marvel at the diminutiveness of some Chihuahuas. The Biggest Dog prize is taken by Benushka, #8, a St. Bernard complete with neck-keg. He's bested a handsome Dalmatian wearing an American-flag scarf who seemed shamelessly to be trying to capitalize on both the movie *Backdraft* and the victory in the Gulf.



"Go for it, Geri! You've got to try somethin' besides one thing!" Thus does Edgar, a ringer for Spuds Mackenzie, make a late entry into the owner look-alike contest, even though he is registered only for the Ugly Dog event. In the end, however, the look-alike prize goes to #5, Jake, who bears no resemblance at all to his owner, a little girl named Megan.

"How do you make your dog do it?" asks one owner whose pet is competing with another's in the Singing Dog event. Actually, no amount of advice seems to help this morning. "I guess the cats must have their tongues today," says the announcer. A man in a gimme cap sings as he imagines his dog might, but it doesn't produce anything from the poor animal, and a big brown Labrador, into whose ear a small blond boy is making a high-pitched howl, succeeds only in looking tormented. Ultimately these two, Chip (the dog) and Clint Simmons, will be the winners, since no dog in the ring was willing to sing on the first attempt, and Chip was wise enough to howl on the second, no doubt to get his master away from his ear. "The rest of 'em'll go home and talk up a storm," predicts one lady after Clint goes up to claim his ribbon. A bit of philosophy emerges, too: stick to your own game. Edgar (Spuds), after washing out as an owner look-alike, has walked off with the honors as Ugliest Dog—his original category.

On this second day of fine hot weather, all of the festival's exhibits are up and running. Near Owosso's first house, an 1836 cabin in which this morning some ladies are hammering dulcimers to the tune of "Danny Boy," a Revolutionary War camp has been set up ("Holy! A cannon!"). There's a Pioneer area, too. Near its tents hang some guns and skins. Just a short stroll south along the river will bring you to the Woodard Paymaster Building, from which folks long ago received their wages from the Owosso Casket Factory. There's a Phunny Phamily Photo booth close by it now, but the Rusty Strings—a mandolin, guitar, and bass—have been a bigger draw for older people this morning.

The riverbanks remain pleasantly crowded with activity until a little before 2:00, when you can feel the whole town being drawn, entranced, away from the river, away from the midway, away from the castle, on bicycle and foot, carrying lawn chairs and sun-umbrellas, as if by Professor Harold Hill, toward Main Street. Owosso is about to have the remarkable experience of *doing* something that the rest of the country is watching on television: it is time for a parade.

The National Victory Celebration in Washington, being carried live on CNN, is a bigger affair than what the Curwood organizers have put together, but there's something to be said for knowing the men marching past you as you sit on the curb in front of the Key State Bank. "Mom, you are so!" says a girl whose mother is trying to deny the tears she's wiping from behind her sunglasses while the 146th and 144th military police who were recently guarding Iraqi POWs ride by in their Humvees. The only shred of ambivalence that will be expressed today about America's military comes from two boys, when the VFW's Patriettes come marching by to much applause: "A little old, aren't they?" says one kid to the other, who replies: "A *little?*"

Republican Congressman Dave Camp, who looks like a college student-body president, elects to run beside his car, as if doing roadwork, waving and tacking toward both sidewalks, shaking hands and performing with a manic quality



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that makes George Bush look like Calvin Coolidge. He generates a polite, and complete, lack of crowd interest. Much more engaging, and dear, are the Senior-Citizen King and Queen, who drive past in a closed, air-conditioned black Chrysler that's unfortunately a bit reminiscent of a hearse.

Local commerce and culture are responsible for much of what floats by on flatbeds: a huge inflated carton of Vitamin D milk from the Michigan Milk Producers; a promotion for the Chesaning production of *Showboat,* July 15-20, starring Bobby Vinton; the Queen of the Montrose Blueberry Festival; and a banner for Yaya's Flame-Broiled Chicken. Charities and good causes abound. The curbside crowd gives its applause to a retarded citizen in a wheelchair and a group of people—walking, not riding—who have had organs replaced. "The Best Plant Is a Transplant," says their sign, which makes good use of the botanically minded parade theme, reminding everyone of the collection containers in fast-food restaurants around town for Dan Rose's needed bone-marrow operation. A bustle of philanthropy takes place among the spectators, as campaigners for the Mr. Owosso title continue collecting for their men. The contestants themselves are Parade Unit #54, right behind last year's winner, Jim Stechschulte, who sits clutching his trophy in glorious contentment atop a white convertible driven by two fabulous sunglassed babes.

The Shriners, crazy as bedbugs, zip around on little toy cars, shaking up the tassels on their fezes, and Benushka, this morning's victorious St. Bernard, glides along on a Chevy pick-up. But most of what passes by has a clear, didactic message, in accordance with either the conservation thrust ("Trees Supply Our Oxygen") or the local devils: "Get a Kid Hooked on Fishing Instead of Drugs" says the Elks' float, and a grandma under the Hardee's sign applauds vigorously when an ecology/anti-drug-combination float ("Make the World a Better Place . . . Be Drug Free") progresses in front of her. It is, however, the students of nearby Baker College who propose the most sweeping synthesis of various new world orders:

SUPPORT OUR GUARDIANS
TREES=EXISTENCE
MILITARY=FREEDOM
EDUCATION=GROWTH

It is a simple-minded algebra, of course, and these universal theorems are offered from a kind of racial and religious Stepford. (Where, by the way, did they ever find a Festival Queen named Rodriguez?) Still, if this town seems a shaky base for big beacons, the parade leaves you feeling you're in a place that does a good job producing its little points of light.

In a couple of hours it's all over (with that almost eerie lack of litter), and the citizens are retracted, like changelings, back toward the festival grounds and their


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own frame houses. You walk along Oliver and Washington Streets and see girls sunning themselves on a rooftop, people eating ham and jelly roll at a picnic table in the driveway. There are still "Support Our Troops" signs in some windows—and in one of them, you notice, a security-alarm decal. Back at the amphitheater a band or two keep going (marimba-ing "New York, New York" after a soft Eagles song), while the crafts booths make a few extra dollars before the castle closes up at 7:00.

By that time the crowds are back on the midway and in the beer tent. It's jammed with over-21s. Though they're not over by much. The boys with their dates wear T-shirts from the festival's three-on-three basketball tournament and the *Risky Business* style of sunglasses fashionable several years ago. The three Mr. Owosso hopefuls reprise their performances from last night, and their campaigners keep collecting, up to the last minute, the money that will, according to Cheryl Gapinski, "stay right here in Shiawassee County." After being paraded in their boxer shorts, the finalists retreat to the dressing room of the nearby firehouse, and the contributions are counted. The crown, a little model of Curwood Castle made by a high school student, will be placed on the winner's head by Rachel Rodriguez. By 8:40 the combined take is up to $12,000 and the counters are still going. Gale Burke does not yet know that the crown will be his, and when the three contestants emerge from the firehouse, in tuxedos, they look like nervous prom dates from another time.

A time, in fact, when girls would dress for the prom by humming "I Feel Pretty" and "Tonight." This night, the poorly attended "Teen Dance," held in the "Wigwam," is a sad spectacle with a handful of very young people attempting Madonna moves to recorded rap. It's clearly cooler to be hanging outside the tent than in it, but most kids between driving and drinking ages are well away from the whole scene. No doubt, if they're not parked, a few romantic couples are strolling by the river and looking up from there at the lights of the midway, those man-made "suns and moons all over the place." Some of them must even know the words to that song: there were kids from the Owosso High School Choir on a float this afternoon lip-synching what sounded like their own recording of "Lullaby of Broadway." One important function of small towns has always been to make some of their sons and daughters hate them, and there was surely at least one boy and one girl on that float dreaming, even now, of New York.

Huck Finn took a raft down the Mississippi to get out of St. Petersburg, Mo. once and for all, but on Sunday morning the raft traffic on the Shiawassee is headed for the center of town and meant to express the hope that the rafters can forever stay in an Owosso just as green and peaceful as it is now. The River Daze races are the environmentalist climax of the festival. The rafts are comic and ingenious, as varied as the floats in yesterday's parade, bearing slogans such as "Trees 'R Us—This Raft Is Totally Recyclable." Swimmers and waders flank their progress, participating in splash battles fought with paddles and buckets and water balloons ("Incoming!"). The Kelly Temporary Services raft capsizes after being shot with a hose—and then the hosers offer to help in righting it. ("Is that a 'temporary' raft?" someone on the bank calls out.)

The race ends at the Heritage Footbridge as some of the last of the festival's contests, human iron-pumping and canine frisbee-catching, run their course. There are still some musicians and vocalists going, including one who's softly singing "From a Distance," that surprisingly popular song about how God is watching us, and how to Him, Up There, it all looks the same.

*One important function of small towns has always been to make some of their sons and daughters hate them, and there was surely at least one boy and one girl on that float dreaming, even now, of New York.*

For $15 this morning you can fly over Owosso in an open-sided Bell helicopter, if you're willing to depend on your seatbelt to hold you in as you rise from the community airport over the newer part of town and then fly right above Tom Dewey's leafy old street. From an aerial perspective like this, a place like New York appears as a marvel of rationality, its clean lines cancelling the anger and randomness of all that's scurrying in the elevators and streets below. But Oliver Street looks pretty much the same up here as it does on the ground, a spot on which it's easy to keep your bearings.

During its 1986 sesquicentennial, Owosso buried, right near the castle, a time capsule it intends to open in the year 2036. The vault and its marker were a donation, unsuperstitiously accepted, from the Jennings-Lyon funeral home, an establishment with, after all, a reliable record of burying things. Those homes below your helicopter with subscriptions to *Time* magazine have on their coffee tables this week an issue whose cover inquires: "Evil: Does it really exist—or do bad things just happen?" One is inclined to respond with J. P. Morgan's line: If you have to ask, you can't afford it. But until the truth at last gives itself up, mercy and luck will, for all practical purposes, amount to the same thing. The helicopter that took you up here still has to get down to the same airport where in 1930 Curwood's son, James Oliver, Jr., was fatally injured in a plane crash. With enough mercy, or luck, you'll make it, and Owosso will, too, you hope, past another forty-five summers, to the resurrection of its time capsule, on a June day right in front of Curwood Castle, whose trees will still be green with life. ❐



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# The Great Ruble Scam

*by Claire Sterling*

Why would anyone in the West want to hold Soviet rubles? The question has puzzled police in half a dozen countries for more than a year, as they've stumbled separately upon black market swaps of rubles for dollars in staggering quantities.

The evidence, still incomplete, points to the criminal penetration of the former Soviet Union by drug cartels and money launderers. The prevailing economic, political, and judicial confusion; the instability discouraging serious Western investment; the rapid expansion of organized crime in Leonid Brezhnev's day—all these factors have made Russia a magnet for the international underworld.

The first signs of the illegal dollar-for-ruble swaps appeared in the winter of 1990-91. Even though the ruble was sliding fast in the collapsing Soviet economy, police phone taps in Italy revealed a ring of professional money-launderers discussing multi-billion ruble deals. A trainload of rubles passed through Poland in transit for Belgium. Large suspect ruble transactions were reported by Belgian, German, and Netherlands police. A Swiss undercover agent was offered a whole shipping container stuffed with rubles. Billion-dollar ruble lots were offered to American investors.

Since then, a special parliamentary commission of the Russian Federation has documented government-backed transactions involving as many as half a trillion rubles. It was because of a single colossal transaction that the commission was set up in January 1991. The contract, blocked at the last moment, involved a government-sponsored exchange of 140 billion rubles on the black market.

At the time, 140 billion rubles amounted to $84 billion at the official exchange rate (1.6:1) and $9.3 billion at the top black-market rate (15:1). Understandably, "The Case of the 140 Billion" caused an uproar in Moscow. The parliamentary commission, politically on the Russian government's side, must have flinched at what it found. In two reports, dated February 15 and March 1, 1991, it provided startling details:

Beginning in the summer of 1990, three different Western "businessmen" approached the Russian government with offers to buy 140 billion rubles or more for $7.8 billion and up (a super-favorable rate of 18 to 1).

The first to come along, in August 1990, was a "John Ross" of New York, who proved to be Jan Semyonovich Zubok of Ukraine, twice jailed there for theft before moving to the United States. Among the documents before the commission was a protocol of intent, signed by Russia's then–prime minister Ivan Silayev, endorsing a 300-billion ruble deal with "Mr. Ross" before his exposure.

Next came a Leo Vanta who, when asked for credentials, proffered an autographed picture of President Reagan. There followed a Colin Gibbons of Britain, who had the signatures, the government sanction, and the authorized Russian bank account on a 140-billion-ruble contract when he was stopped.

The signatory on the Russian side was A.A. Sveridov, a regional deputy from Chelyabinsk in the Urals, signing for an improbable and penniless "Ekho Manufacturing Ecological Company." His guarantor was Russia's deputy prime minister, Gennady Filshin.

Filshin had given his blessings to an arrangement whereby Gibbons was to put $7.8 billion in a Swiss bank, while 140 billion rubles would be deposited to his name in a Russian bank. Both accounts would be under Gibbons's control. On these singular terms, the deputy prime minister directed Russia's ministry of trade to "render assistance and support for the contract," and instructed the Moscow inter-regional commercial bank to open the necessary ruble account (#713713).

Testifying before the commission, Filshin claimed that Gibbons was going to spend the dollars to "saturate the Russian market" with 700,000 tons of meat, 300,000 tons of butter, and other "top-quality" Western goods. He was also supposed to "invest and reinvest" his newly acquired rubles in the Russian economy. In fact, there were no such clauses in the contract, nor did Gibbons promise anything of the kind. He was simply interested in the currency. He told the investigators only that a client had asked him "to buy a great sum of Soviet rubles." →

*Claire Sterling is the author of* The Terror Network *and* Octopus.



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The last straw was the discovery that Gibbons was a professional con-man, wanted by Interpol on a British warrant. Upon learning all this, the commission ruled that Deputy Prime Minister Filshin should be relieved of his duties for "incompetence, negligence, insincerity, abuse of powers and deception of the Parliamentary Commission."

The idea that Russia's highest leaders could have worked such a scam seemed so incredible that many thought the KGB must have framed them. Suspicions grew when hardliner Valentin Pavlov, premier of the still-existing Soviet Union, ordered the recall of all 50- and 100-ruble notes, putting the blame on Boris Yeltsin's government for its Gibbons deal. Though Pavlov's order virtually wiped out popular savings, he maintained that it was really meant to stem an uncontrollable flow of rubles to the West, and "a river of dirty money" coming back. Predictably, the Communist premier accused Western banks of an imperialist plot to dethrone President Mikhail Gorbachev and destabilize the Soviet economy. Western diplomats dismissed the charge as "bilge"—Britain's foreign minister called it "manifestly dotty"—but Pavlov was wrong only about the plot, not about the money.

Rubles were certainly pouring out of the Soviet Union from every side in 1991; seizures at the border were up 200 percent, reported the head of Soviet customs. And dirty money was undoubtedly flowing in. With serious Western businessmen holding back, foreign speculators were teaming up with members of an estimated 3,500 domestic "Red Mafia" groups to fill the breach. According to Interpol, at least 40 percent of the USSR's new joint ventures were set up with funds "of dubious origin."

The Russian federation alone had tried to swap a good half trillion rubles for dollars in various black market deals, the parliamentary commission found. The goal wasn't necessarily personal gain: it was government policy. Filshin, who went on to become Russia's minister of foreign trade, still insists that the Gibbons deal was "a version of the Marshall Plan." That and similar deals for black market dollars had been approved by all his superiors—including Boris Yeltsin, the commission noted. Plainly, Russia's democratic leaders, emerging from the Communist dark ages, were sadly unaware of the sharks circling in the outside world, and knew little of acceptable financial practices in the West. Seeing what they thought was a shortcut to salvation, they took it.

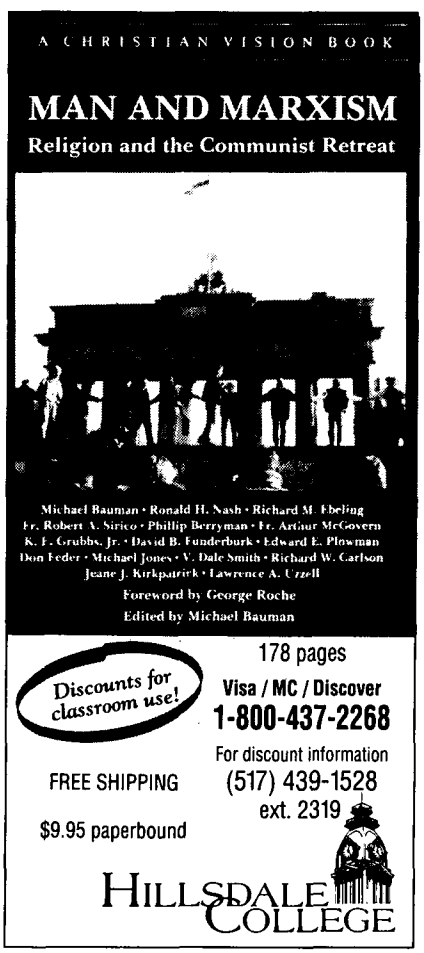
While some of their deals fell through, there is ample evidence that hundreds of billions of rubles were up for sale in Europe and the U.S. while the Ross-Vanta-Gibbons talks went on in Moscow. It was during the winter of 1990-91 that billion-dollar lots were offered to American investors; the trainload of rubles passed through Poland; the Italian police intercepted phone calls in Verona and Rimini involving multi-billion ruble deals (for which Judge Roberto Sapio ordered fourteen arrests); and a Swiss undercover agent in Bellinzona actually bought a sample 100,000 rubles from someone claiming to have a container full. The seller was notorious Turkish heroin trafficker Hamza Turkuresin, closely associated with Calabria's criminal 'Ndrangheta, and with a group known to belaundering cocaine money for Colombia's Medellín cartel.

In Geneva that December, Judge Jean-Pierre Trembley ordered the arrest of a Colombian, a German, and three Argentines representing the same money-launderers. They had been trying to broker a swap of 70 billion rubles for $4.6 billion. Trembley was unable to locate the rubles, reportedly left in a container with Brink's in Holland, and he finally released the suspects. "I just couldn't believe that anybody in his right mind would swap narcodollars for rubles that nobody can spend," he said.

These rubles *could* be spent, however. They were offered to foreign investors either in bank-to-bank credit transfers or with certificates of reentry and permission to open Russian bank accounts: the parliamentary commission and all Western police accounts agree on this. Under these conditions, the rubles could be used to buy whatever is for sale in the former Soviet Union, whose natural resources—the richest in the world—can be had for giveaway prices. (A ton of petroleum, for instance, can today be bought for $25 in black market rubles and sold for $160 in Europe.)

This was demonstrably why international criminals were so interested in rubles. Their true design was actually written into the protocol of intent signed by Russia's former prime minister Silayev with "John Ross," the Ukrainian ex-con. In exchange for the black-market dollars, Russia's government undertook to "allow foreign businessmen to buy and export, without duty, a strictly limited range of raw and other materials, waste products for recycling, products made of precious materials, etc."

In a confidential report to Interpol in April of last year, the head of the Soviet interior ministry's organized crime department, Gennady Chebetarev, described how Russia and the other Soviet republics were already being looted in just this way. "Mafia-type groups [are committing] large-scale unlawful transactions with foreign partners," he wrote. High quality materials, precious metals and alloys are being bought up for export "at scrap metal" prices. Titanium is being reworked and exported as "waste." The fact that such information is now coming to light may help Russia's democratic leaders cope with this mounting threat to its economic sovereignty. ❐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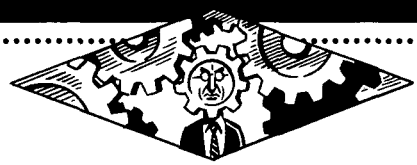

# Biased Against Everyone

*by Chester E. Finn, Jr.*

The recent report "How Schools Shortchange Girls"—compiled by Wellesley College's Center for Research on Women and published by the American Association of University Women (AAUW)—drew front-page notice in the major dailies, under such headlines as the *New York Times*'s blast that "Bias Against Girls Is Found Rife in Schools, With Lasting Damage." The report claims that the current school reform debate pays scant attention to this injustice and urges some forty different actions to right that wrong.

Still—do discrepant results always reveal discrimination? And how helpful is it to dwell on differences between groups when no group is doing well enough to be proud of? For what's most interesting about the AAUW report is that an equally damning document could be written to demonstrate that U.S. education shortchanges boys. The data are compelling:

•Boys are more likely to be held back in school. Among 1988 eighth graders, 21 percent of males but only 14 percent of females had repeated a grade.

•Boys are more often sent to "special education" classes—designed for learning-disabled children but often used as a means of removing troublesome students from classrooms. More than two-thirds of the secondary special education population is male.

•Boys score lower than girls in reading and writing at every age level tested, and have done so for two decades, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

•Boys are less likely to enroll in college; those who do are less likely to earn degrees. In 1989, females accounted for 55 percent of post-secondary students, 57 percent of BAs, and 51 percent of MAs.

To be sure, it's unlikely that anyone would issue a report on bias against males. But if unequal results *per se* signal discrimination, a thousand reports like the AAUW's could be written. Plenty have already been written on racial minorities, and it's easy to show that many education outcomes are lower for blacks and Hispanics than for whites. But what is one to make of the fact that sometimes blacks do better than Hispanics and sometimes vice versa? (In math, Hispanics do better at ages 9 and 13, blacks at age 17; in reading blacks excel at 13, while Hispanics lead at 9 and 17.) Is this due to prejudice?

Using AAUW logic, one can even make the case that the current education system is biased against whites, at least in math and science, where Asian-Americans consistently score higher. (Asian eighth-grade girls actually do better in science than white boys.) But Asian pupils don't fare as well as whites in reading or writing. Is this due to prejudice? Does the educational system favor Asians in some subjects and stymie them in others?

How about geographic bias? Students from the southeastern U.S. consistently show lower scores on nearly every subject than their contemporaries to the north and west? Is prejudice at work here, too?

Of course not. But the outrage industry doesn't care. Show that an approved minority—or, in the case of females, majority—has been oppressed by some policy, practice, or institution, and you get doting attention in the press, orations on the floor of Congress, and the near-certainty of financial support for further studies and press conferences. We're familiar with the pattern. Yet reports such as the AAUW's are damaging in several ways. For one, they invite us to overrate the quality of U.S. education generally, to view it as marred only by the failure of certain sub-populations to get their fair share. This denies the larger reality—that practically *nobody* is learning enough today—and encourages incremental rather than wholesale change. If the system is fundamentally sound, why demand higher standards, press for better tests, insist on choice for parents and children, or enlist colleges and employers in "raising the stakes" by requiring more skills and knowledge?

For another, they let us wriggle off the hook regarding our own behavior and that of our children, by suggesting that whatever is awry in American education is the fault of "the system" rather than the work of individuals.

Finally, such reports encourage social fragmentation by rewarding victimization, brazenly displaying the benefits that shower down on groups and organizations that know how to press the bias button. This worsens the fissiparous tendencies that are nowhere more evident than in the U.S. educational system, with its multicultural obsessions.

Mischievous as it is, however, the AAUW report may unwittingly perform a public service. By calling attention to how poorly girls are doing in school, it invites us to re-examine the performance of boys. And also of whites, blacks, Asians, and Hispanics; of public and private schoolchildren; of kids in Alabama, Oregon, and Ohio. Obviously we can save time by looking at all of them together. When we do, we find—*mirabile visu*—that, if weak performance is evidence of prejudice, then American education is biased against everybody. ❐

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*Chester E. Finn, Jr., professor of education and public policy at Vanderbilt University, is the author of* We Must Take Charge: Our Schools and Our Future *(The Free Press).*



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# Snippets

*by Benjamin J. Stein*

*Wednesday*

A meeting with my dentist, Dr. S., and his lovely assistant, D., to get my teeth cleaned. Their office is in a dismal part of Reseda, a community in the news recently because a man has been holding up its 7-Elevens. He brandishes a syringe at clerks, tells them that it's filled with AIDS-tainted blood, and threatens to stick the clerks with it unless they give him all their cash. So far he hasn't been caught.

As I pulled into the parking lot, I noticed that the attendant's cage was almost completely covered with grillework. So that no one could shove a syringe in there and rob the Polynesian woman who's been working there for ten years, with her steel teeth.

The hygienist must have thought I was the guy with the syringe. She had on a face mask. Goggles. Rubber gloves. She scraped at my teeth with that titanium toothpick they all use, and soon the blood was flowing lushly out of my gums. Occasionally I was to spit it out into a drain. "Where does this drain go?" I asked the hygienist as well as I could.

"Into the city drain system and then out to sea," she said.

"Hmm," I thought. "Hmm." A major gap here in the AIDS protection system. Of course there are all of those drug addicts downtown, too, who really do stick people.

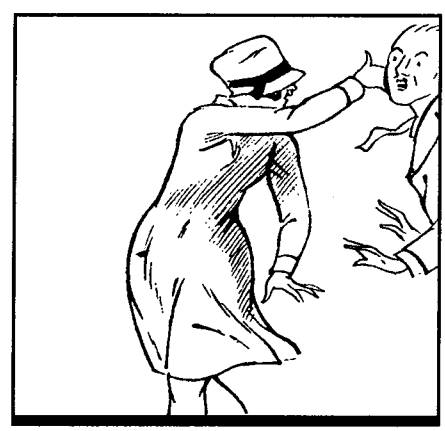
The hygienist told me for about an hour about how bad the recession was. Forty percent vacancy rates for office buildings in the Valley. One hundred and fifty thousand engineers to be laid off in the Reseda area alone. Rocketdyne, Hughes, to be virtually shuttered.

Thanks for nothing, Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

*Benjamin J. Stein is a writer, lawyer, economist, and actor living in Malibu, California.*

Dr. S. came in and looked at my X-rays. He told me business was flat at best, and looked sad. Then I was released. Cost of dental cleaning and X-rays, one hour elapsed time, $123. Increase over the last visit fourteen months previous, 50 percent. In a very bad recession. Good luck.

On the way back to my car, I passed two teenage girls walking out of a gynecologist's office. One, a blonde angel, was bent over, holding her stomach, face red and broken out with perspiration,



tears in her eyes. The other, plumper, was holding her, telling her it was all right, that she had had no choice.

God help us all.

In my car, I drove along the Ventura Freeway, and then heard my car phone ringing. *Ring, ring, ring.*

"Hi," said my pal, L., a young woman whose father is a diplomat in Bangkok. She is 23 and has a "business" selling heavy silver belts to movie stars in Malibu. "Hi," she repeated. "You'll never guess what happened. I was in a commercial this morning as an extra downtown, and I turned down an alley to try to find the parking, and it was before dawn, and in the alley, there were all of these homeless people, just like a nest of ants, all clustered around fires in old trash cans, rubbing their hands. Their faces were covered with scary dirt and sores. At first I thought it was a movie set, maybe some kind of battle scene, and then I saw it was just totally lost homeless people. It was unbelievably sad."

"You didn't know they were there?"

"I've never been downtown," she said. "I just stay out in Malibu all the time. Anyway, it was a commercial for some really expensive kind of skin cream, and the police kept having to keep the homeless guys from taking food off the catering truck. It was pretty amazing."

Off to Temple Israel, the *shul* where my devil boy, Tommy, attends preschool. Tonight is Purim, a festival celebrating the escape of the Jews from evil Vizier Haman long ago. The synagogue's main sanctuary was absolutely filled with congregants and their children. The children were all dressed in costumes. Tommy was dressed as a soldier, in camouflage, with a toy machine gun. He kept trying to shoot me with it. That's fine. I don't want him to be afraid of me.

The whole service was cleverly set to the tune of *West Side Story*. Temple Israel's two rabbis—including the one who calls his pet rabbit "Rabbi Rabbit"—were dressed in jeans and T-shirts. Various other officials of the synagogue were also dressed like Sharks and Jets. The woman cantor wore high stacked heels such as I haven't seen since I left New York's subway system sixteen years ago. One of the songs sung to commemorate this 4,000-year-old festival:

*When you're a Jew,*
*You're a Jew all the way—*
*From your first snip at Bris*
*To your dying oi vey.*

I'M NOT KIDDING. I'M NOT MAKING THIS UP.



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Off to Cafe Latte, a restaurant on Wilshire, to meet my pal Lenny and my pals Lally and her mother, Bootsie, for dinner. Lally is 26, Mom is 46 and looks great. Lenny is, well, Lenny doesn't want me to say his age. It's about the same as mine. He's muscular, a well-conditioned soul. He and Bootsie hit it off right away. Lenny makes a certain kind of skin-care product that he sells by phone. Eight women selling by phone all at once. Sales are booming.

Bootsie wants to start a Beverly Hills Beauty Treatment Secret Program. Six months to look sensational, or something like that. They both talked eagerly about buying TV time, about info-mercials, bottle manufacturers, FDA approval and how to avoid needing it, and whether phone sales work better than TV sales.

"The bottom line," said Lenny, "is that once you start to sell a few hundred of those a week, you start to make some real money."

"The bottom line," said Bootsie, "is that you really have to get repeat customers."

"Bootsie," I said. "Lenny," I said, "What's in these products that makes you look so great?"

They both laughed. "We don't know, just some glop," Lenny said.

"I don't have a formula yet," Bootsie said. "It'll be something."

"So the bottom line is that it's a hustle."

They both looked mightily offended. "Not at all," Lenny said. "Because we encourage buyers to believe that they should take care of themselves, so maybe when they buy our stuff, they won't wake up and put their faces into a buzz saw that morning."

"Plus," Bootsie said, "I want to tell people that it's all right for them to be interested in looking good, that it's not a sin."

Oh, my mistake.

As I walked into my house shortly after midnight, there was a ring on the phone. It was Lally.

"You really hurt my Mom's feelings," she said. "She's just trying to help people feel good about themselves."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I've obviously been unhinged by all the driving I did today."

On TV, there was word that "the AIDS bandit" has struck again.

*Thursday*

A rushed, maddening day. My braino father, the superstar economist and thinker, was in George Washington University Hospital. He had undergone an appendectomy the day before at the tender age of 75. When I called him from Malibu, he sounded very sad and lonely, and since I am his only son, I decided to fly off and visit him.

At my hotel, the charming but slightly down-at-the-heels River Inn, in Foggy Bottom, there were masses of feminist "activists" in the bar, smoking and kvetching. I soon learned that they were there for the March for Murder, as I call it. Isn't it strange that the pro-death side on the abortion question is headed by men and women who are explicitly in a groove of life without children? Hasn't anyone noticed this odd fact? Or that the people who march for death look just as angry and filled with rage as the storm troopers of old?

I can usually tell if someone has a good case by how angry he or she looks.


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*Friday*

And now for something extremely obvious. My father was lying in his room on the fifth floor of George Washington University Hospital, sleeping, as I walked in. He looked tired and unshaven, but otherwise much as always. I sat in a chair and watched him. Outside, a patient across the hall was crying out, "Nurse! Nurse!" in a pitiful Southern black accent. My father was tossing slightly and then awakened and said "Hello," as if he had just awakened from one of those naps he used to take forty years ago as he listened to the Washington Senators on the radio in a hammock in our back yard in Silver Spring as fireflies glided around through the night. He asked me to get his nurse and they talked about his treatment. I walked down the hall and looked at the patients. Many of them were extremely thin men.

My mother came over, bearing a huge pile of newspapers. My sister entered carrying a fashionable sweater. We talked of true trivia—Clinton, Brown, and Tsongas—and tried to hide our fear and anxiety.

As I watched and talked, I thought that someday I will probably be lying here as an older man, only without my parents. Will my devil boy, Tommy, come to see me? Will anyone at the hospital care to minister to a European white male? Or might I just as well take my hemlock right now?

To cheer myself up, I walked over to the George Washington student center. Twenty years ago, when my fugitive wife Alex was a law student at G.W., we used to meet there for wine coolers. Fifty cents each, as I recall. We would listen to music, drink one glass of cooler, and then go home together. Of all life's mysteries, the strangest is this: that time, which seems so permanent at the moment, passes and is gone forever.

*Saturday*

Lunch in Georgetown with Aram Bakshian, one of the absolutely smartest fellows I have ever known. Ace speechwriter, ace reviewer, ace everything that calls for wit and articulation and erudition.

Georgetown was a mess. But really



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disgusting. Scary throngs of Third World people jostling everyone else on the sidewalks. Stores selling clothes for pimps and prostitutes. (Believe me, I know what those look like.)

Everything that used to be nice about Georgetown was gone. No more Savile Book Shop. No more elegant women in white gloves. No more genteel real estate agencies. No, this is part America, part Tehran, part Sub-Saharan Africa. It scared me, and all through lunch I felt dizzy at how much life had changed.

Aram tried to cheer me up with funny stories about Clinton. But I don't find Clinton at all funny, and I went back to the River Inn and slept.

I woke up late in the afternoon and went to National Airport to pick up Alex and Tommy, who had flown in to see my father. Tommy demanded a toy. Like a complete wimp, I bought him one: a helicopter.

As I drove him to the hotel, he said, "Daddy, I'm going to burn your house in Malibu down. With you in it."

Hmm. Obviously some work needs to be done to convince him to come visit me in the hospital in years to come.

I took Tommy and Alex to dinner at a Vietnamese place in Georgetown. It was jammed with angry-looking you-know-whats getting psyched for their march. They looked hungrily at my four-and-a-half-year-old Mr. Wonderful. Too late, I thought, you'll never get your hands on him now.

*Monday*

A day of terror. I didn't sleep all night, worrying about money, health, life and death. By morning, I was a basket case of fear and fatigue. I dragged myself through the day, talking to my father about economics and basketball. He was back at his Watergate apartment—which has the highest density of newspapers per cubic foot of any dwelling in America, I suspect. He was clearly still in pain and still exhausted.

I went back in the late afternoon and watched TV news shows about the abortion march. Speaker after speaker stood up and talked about how they, the abortionists, had a lot of votes. Another sure sign of how bankrupt their moral position is: they cannot even bring themselves to say that their view is right. Now they just say they have the raw voting power to put themselves over, no matter what the rights and wrongs are.

Now this is really revolting: many of them marched holding photos of cute babies, and signs that said "Every baby a wanted baby." At long last, have you no shame?

I went out for a walk along Eye Street. As I headed down towards 24th Street, a carload of undergraduates screeched to a stop next to me and started shouting, "Anyone? Anyone?" An undergrad asked me for my autograph and told me he was on his way to hear Richard Nixon speak. Why, he asked, didn't I go too?

I got into my little rented car and headed for the Ronald Reagan Center next to Union Station. Sure enough, there was Bruce Herschensohn, Senate candidate in my state of California, and Ken Khachigian, both ace speechwriters, and moments after I said hello to them, there was RN himself, getting out of a car. He saw me and said he had just quoted me in a speech.

"I know, Mr. President," I said, "and I'm very grateful indeed."

It was his famous speech about helping the Russians. He had paraphrased me by saying, "You can't sit down at the table unless you put up some chips." I'd stolen it from Joan Didion, so it was pure gravy for me.

"I was very honored to be quoted along with Pushkin and Churchill," I added.

"It was a damned good speech, too," he said.

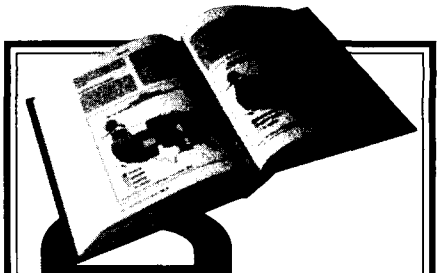
"It surely was," I agreed.

"You keep up all that acting," he said, poking me in the chest. "Still have all those dogs?"

"Yes, I do."

He went to a small lectern and gave a simply superb speech. He talked about Helen Douglas, about aid to Greece and Turkey, and then about how all of this related to Bruce Herschensohn. He analyzed the presidential campaign and made a few funny jokes about Brown and Clinton.

I started to cry when I looked at RN and listened to him. He always makes me cry. Memory of better days at the White House, comparison of his life with mine, identification with the kid who always got the short end of the stick. Plus, RN has always been unbelievably kind to me and my family. He has about ten times as much personality as anyone I've ever known, and I think he should be President again. ❐

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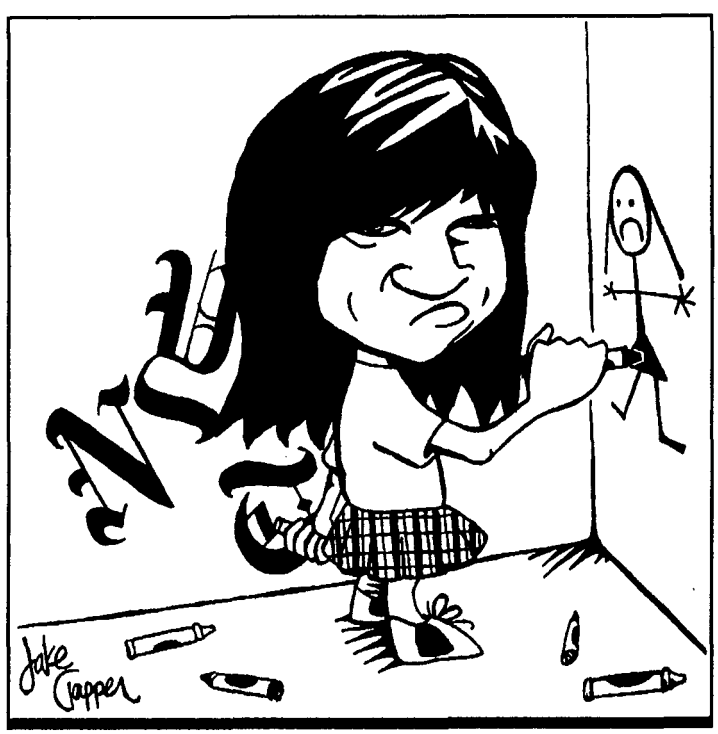
# Booby Prize

*by Terry Eastland*

Now that Anna Quindlen of the *New York Times* has won herself a Pulitzer Prize for commentary, there's one more reason to grant her lifetime membership in the Current Wisdom section of this magazine. But an event that is good for *The American Spectator* is not necessarily good for the country or the press—or for women, whom I bring up because it is on their behalf that Quindlen claims to speak. As she said in a *Commonweal* interview this past February, having "51 percent of the readers is pretty good."

The Pulitzer Prize is the one award journalists truly esteem among the many they bestow upon themselves. Quindlen's prize not only confirms the *New York Times* in its decision two years ago to relocate her from the "Living" section, where she wrote "Life in the 30s," a weekly column about herself, to the op-ed page as a commentator on things "Public & Private." It also sends a message to newspapers everywhere about what passes for excellence in opinion writing, especially when women are at the keyboard. No, make that *only* when Quindlen-like women are at the keyboard, for no male (with the possible exception of the *Washington Post*'s Quindlen clone Andrew Ward, weirdly identified as a "former NPR commentator who lives in the West") could write her gender-based column.

The Pulitzer board hailed Quindlen's winning submissions—on, among other things, abortion (for, although she's Roman Catholic), the Gulf War (against), Clarence Thomas (against), and Anita Hill (for)—as "compelling." At the risk of being told that I "just don't understand," I must say that that is one adjective that emphatically does not apply to her work. Criticism of Quindlen, as of any writer, however, should not turn upon gender, and in her case, not incidentally, it has not. Last June, in a review of Quindlen's first novel, *Object Lessons*, Karen Lehrman of the *New Republic* also examined her op-ed work in a critique evidently ignored by the Pulitzer board at Columbia University. "The women who write political commentary should be read not because they have some gender-based talent for empathy," wrote Lehrman, "but because they have something to say." And Anna Quindlen has very little to say.




Quindlen *can* write well, and not all of her columns are unsuitable for an op-ed page. She sometimes even does a little reporting, as when—to cite one of the columns included in her Pulitzer submission—she visited a homeless shelter established in the basement of a Queens church by a Dean Witter vice president. When she resists the urge to sermonize (which, alas, she did not do in the case of the man from Dean Witter), her style brings freshness to an often stale op-ed page. But even well-written, non-preachy columns on a homeless shelter or a day-care center or a project for disadvantaged kids are not enough to sustain a twice-a-week offering on the op-ed page of a leading newspaper. Of course, this ignores why she was really brought to the page. As Lehrman writes, "Her journalistic career has been based on the belief that the woman's voice—the voice of compassion, humanity, softness—is missing from newspapers in general." Her op-ed presence is the *Times*'s way of saying that this voice must be heard, particularly on political issues. The Pulitzer board has solemnly agreed.

Quindlen is much more than just another Ellen Goodman, who writes about many of the same things—the homeless, child care, domesticity, and abortion. For, unlike Quindlen, Goodman, a Pulitzer winner some years ago, does not pretend to speak for all women. At her best, Goodman gives reasons for her views, and never suggests that the merits of her arguments turn upon gender. Quindlen's approach is radi-

*Terry Eastland is resident fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.*



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cally different, as in the Pulitzer entry written three days after Anita Hill's charges against Clarence Thomas were made public.

"Listen to us," she began, the verb in the imperative mood, the "us" being women. "You will notice there is no please in that sentence," she added for emphasis, before observing that "white men of the United States Senate" were sitting as the jury in this case. As to why Anita Hill had not come forward ten years earlier, why she had stayed on the job, why she was reluctant to confide in the Judiciary Committee, Quindlen wrote: "The women I know have had no difficulty imagining possible answers." Given that she claims to speak for all women, Quindlen felt no need to advise *which* women it is she knows. *Her* women, of course, all sided with Hill.

The following paragraph from the Hill column further illustrates her self-referential smugness. "From time to time I am told of the oppression of the white male," Quindlen wrote, "of how the movements to free minorities from prejudice have resulted in bias against the majority. Watching Judge Thomas's confirmation hearings, I wondered how any sane person could give this credence." Again, she used the first person, but this time to trivialize such a major issue as racial quotas; apparently, she has never been "told" that a quota might limit the opportunities of women as well as men, or of minorities, depending upon its design.

Quindlen's work is a function not of reason but of the company she keeps. So much for the public world normally treated on op-ed pages. Quindlen is comfortable writing "Private & Public" because, in her solipsistic world, the two terms are interchangeable.

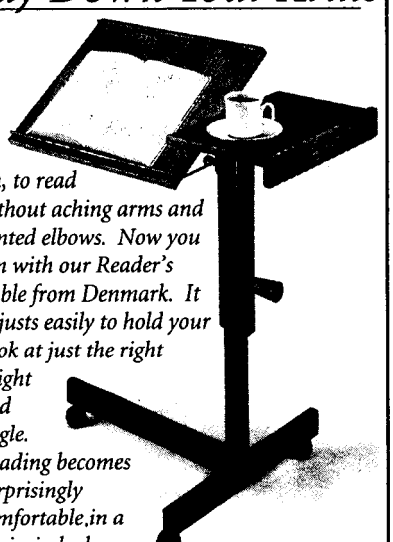
Quindlen thus finds it easy to exempt herself from thinking hard about complex issues. In her prize-winning column on the Gulf War, shortly before Saddam Hussein was evicted from Kuwait, the truth of the matter was in fact provided her by her peculiar sensibility. The Gulf crisis is not a "black-and-white, good-and-bad, win-and-lose" issue, she wrote, because this is "not that kind of world." How knowing! Similarly, in a prize-winning column on Magic Johnson and AIDS, Quindlen did not grapple with what is true about a disease that for the most part is behaviorally induced and behaviorally preventable. Her public policy suggestions amounted to bashing those who rely "solely on chastity." Her concluding sentiment is pure cant: she hoped we all "learn to deal with our national tragedy with as much dignity and determination as this good man [Johnson] brings to his personal one." Indeed, Quindlen is awfully proud that her woman's way of treating political issues shuns reason. "Whenever my response to an important subject is rational and completely cerebral, I know there is something wrong with it," she wrote in a column Lehrman quotes. "I have always been governed by my gut."

In another of her Pulitzer-winners, Quindlen parenthetically remarked, self-referentially as usual, about how "a bunch of us left-liberal types are gathered around some take-out Chinese and a nicely decanted MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour." Imagine the Pulitzer board giving an award to a right-wing columnist who talks this way. (For that matter, imagine the Pulitzer board recognizing—and the *New York Times* offering a regular column to—a Catholic who agreed with her church's teachings on issues such as abortion.) The point is that Quindlen's politics are about as liberal as they come. Consider her column linking abortion and Clarence Thomas. After calling abortion "the issue of our lives" (there she goes again, speaking for all women), she worried that Thomas wouldn't show much empathy with "a group of desperate women in a clinic waiting room." She called on the judge to address the issue "with humanity," although it was obviously not the humanity of the unborn she had in mind. Nor did she come to grips, as anyone writing about abortion in connection with the law must, with the constitutionality of *Roe* v. *Wade*. It apparently has never occurred to Quindlen that one may defend abortion rights, as she does, but also regard *Roe* as untenable, on the grounds that the Constitution does not provide for a right of privacy encompassing abortion. Quindlen is incapable of wrestling with serious moral and legal questions.

She is capable, however, of some peculiar paroxysms, such as this from the abortion column: "To watch as one of the most important issues of our times, an issue that affects the lives of millions of women intimately, is reduced to a political fandango in some cynical means-ends construct and a peevish annoyance for a Senator [Orrin Hatch] who will never have to think twice about who holds jurisdiction over the territory beneath his skin is worse than dispiriting." Got it. Or this, from her AIDS column: "I don't want to hear any more about how condoms shouldn't be advertised on television and in the newspapers. I don't want to hear any more about the impropriety of clean-needle exchanges or the immorality of AIDS education in the schools."

"I don't want" . . . "Listen to us." This is a childish voice, petulant and insistent, and the Pulitzer-winning pride of the *New York Times*, 1992. Asked by *Commonweal* how long she would write "Public & Private," Quindlen said that her sort of issues—child care, family planning and abortion, and homelessness—are "at the forefront of American consciousness" and that she thought she could "go on writing about them forever." Great news for Current Wisdom! ❐


*Lay Down Your Arms*



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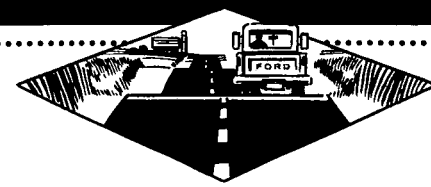


# Reality Check

*by Joe Queenan*

When I was a nine-year-old boy growing up on the mean streets of North Philadelphia, I got a job in a clothing store that took me off the mean streets of Philadelphia. The owner was a stocky, muscular, German-American ex-boxer named Len Mohr, who had joined the Marine Corps at age 32 and won the Distinguished Service Medal on Iwo Jima. When I went to work for him in 1960, he was still doing all sorts of dangerous things, like refereeing amateur fights at a North Philly gym called the Blood Pit, operating three parking lots within the shadow of Connie Mack Stadium—where the Phillies were losing games twenty-three at a time—and trading in penny stocks. He was a tough, direct sort of guy, and one of his favorite expressions has always stuck with me. Whether he was talking to local hoods, ward leaders trying to shake him down, or shifty jobbers hoping to unload three dozen pink shirts with ruffled cuffs (never an easy item to hawk in an Irish-Polish neighborhood), Len always used the same expression. Whenever someone said or did something stupid, implausible, or completely wacky, he would point to the door of the dressing room and say: "Why don't you step into my office and I'll straighten you out on a few things?"

I got to thinking about Len Mohr a couple of weeks ago when I saw a rock band called Black 47. This band, comprising five standard-issue, unpleasant young Irishmen dressed in black, was the opening act for David Bromberg, an excellent guitarist who plays a soothing, life-affirming mixture of blues, folk, bluegrass, and rock 'n' roll. Black 47 eschewed anything so congenial. Ignoring the three cardinal rules for opening acts—don't upstage the headliner, don't wreck the mood, and don't play more than six stupid numbers—Black 47 performed an interminable set in which the lads repeatedly exhorted the audience to help them establish a socialist worker's state. Exuding the unctuous sanctimony that has become a staple of Celtic rockers, many of them bald, Black 47 went on and on about the imminent demise of capitalism. Sensing that these boys had never renewed their newspaper subscriptions after Woodstock, I wanted to jump onto the stage and tell them: "Why don't you step into my office and I'll straighten you out on a few things?"

I got to thinking the same thing when I attended a Jerry Brown rally at the GM plant in North Tarrytown, New York, which is scheduled to be shuttered in 1995. Jerry's material was fine—he was in vintage apocalyptic-jeremiadic form—and he wisely refrained from using the word "ashram" in front of 300 guys in baseball caps and leather jackets. It was the United Auto Workers officials who were the problem. Before Brown was allowed to take the stage, he had to suffer through *six* different speeches from the UAW honchos, including one delivered by Michael Moore, of GM-bashing *Roger and Me* fame. They all gave their usual spiel—management deserves to die; so do those damn Mexicans—but then one of them went off the cliff and said that the quality of U.S. automobiles had *never* declined all the years the GM plant had been in Tarrytown. This was news to the hundred or more Yuppies for Brown who had driven to the rally in Mazdas. And it was news to me: I came in a Toyota. Indeed, the rally might have had a bigger turnout save for all those UAW workers stuck at home because their Buicks and Pontiacs wouldn't start. All of which made me want to tell the UAW boss: "Why don't you step into my office . . ."

I got to thinking the same thing when I read an article about the continuing travails of University of Nevada–Las Vegas coach Jerry Tarkanian. In March, after years of scandal that eventually resulted in a Supreme Court ruling against him, Tark the Shark finally stepped down as coach of the Runnin' Rebels. Tarkanian's last game was covered by the Associated Press, which concluded its report with these words: "The image of his players, including pictures of three with a convicted point-shaver, have damaged the academic standing of the university."

Hold on a second. How did they do that? When did UNLV acquire an academic standing that *could* be damaged? Was I out of the room when this happened? Gone fishing? Reading an incredibly engrossing E. J. Dionne, Jr. book explaining the gnawing sense of alienation felt by the American body politic? Unlikely. No, I had only one thing to say to the author of that inept AP article, and I think you know what it is.

The list of people I'd like to see in my office goes on and on. Barney Frank, who let his roommate run a prostitution ring out of his Washington townhouse, and then wrote a book called *Speaking Frankly: What's Wrong With the Democratic Party and How to Fix It*, has certainly earned a visit. Ditto Marilyn Quayle, whose Cold War thriller *Embrace the Serpent* is set in a strange, pre–John Bircher era where the Russkies are still calling the shots.

I would also like to straighten out Michael Jackson. In his latest megamillion-dollar extravaganza, he is dressed in motorcycle boots and what appears to be a lamé skirt, this in a video set in the time of the Pharaohs. Eight years ago, when he made "Billy Jean" and "Beat

*Joe Queenan's book on Vice President Dan Quayle will be published by Hyperion this fall.*



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It," there was no one on earth who could cut a rug like Jackson. Today, the 435th extra from any Paula Abdul video is more innovative. Jackson needs help. Although he still has the $50 million contract with Sony, the bones of the Elephant Man, and Diana Ross's friendship, he needs to be taken inside for a chat. I will seat him next to Marilyn, the five Irish rockers, and the UAW official, but he'd better bring a book. I'll be starting the session with Barney Frank, and I

RUSSIA WATCH

# The Dispossessed

*by Cathy Young*

Early in this century, revolutions born of utopian visions to reshape human life seemed about to bring intellectuals to unmatched power—only to demote them to a far less exalted status as servants of the totalitarian state and take away their freedom of thought. Then intellectuals led the fight against totalitarianism—until one day, to their amazement, they won, only to find themselves confused and unsure what to do next. Such is the brief history of intellectuals in the ex-Communist world that emerged from discussions at an extraordinary conference, "Intellectuals and Social Change in Eastern and Central Europe," held on the Newark Campus of Rutgers University from April 9 to April 11 and co-sponsored by *Partisan Review.*

The city of Newark, generally not known as a cultural center, hosted a dazzling constellation of literati, including Nobel laureates Saul Bellow, Joseph Brodsky, and Czeslaw Milosz, *grand dame* of Russian letters Tatyana Tolstaya, occasional heretic Susan Sontag, novelists Vassily Aksyonov, Ralph Ellison, and Doris Lessing, historians Richard Pipes and Walter Laqueur, writer and translator Richard Lourie, and others. The conference was supported by the National Endowment for Humanities—undoubtedly a worthier cause than a chocolate-covered Karen Finley, but I'm still not sure why admission had to be free, especially since few people in the audience seemed poor.

The very first panel—which, accidentally or not, included the three Nobel laureates—grappled with the modern intellectual's dilemma, summed up by Bellow: in totalitarian societies, intellectuals are important but oppressed; in democratic societies, they are free but marginal. This applies equally to ideologues and system-builders such as Rousseau or Marx, whose ascendancy was unanimously deplored, and to true writers interested in language, harmony, and human experience. And the liberated countries of the ex-Soviet bloc, despite their reputation for spiritual richness, do not seem to have found a third way in culture any more than they have in economics: these days, the public in Moscow lines up for a movie called *A Gang of Lesbians* (presumably Russia's answer to *Basic Instinct*).

Brodsky, whose works are being published in his native country nearly thirty years after he was jailed as a "parasite," confirmed that the role of writers and intellectuals in Russia was diminishing. He also uttered what may have been the most memorable line of the conference: "The writer owes absolutely nothing, zilch, to society." Bellow sounded more pessimistic as he spoke of a rising tide of "aesthetic illiteracy" and of flagging interest in "the things we have devoted our entire lives to serving," eclipsed by popular culture and TV. "I suppose a society can live without art, just as one can eat without salt," he said, "but it's not very agreeable, and it's not even real life."

Though highly receptive to such concerns after catching a few minutes of "Studs" on TV the night before, I was bothered by the dim view Bellow, with his predictions of "mental misery," seemed to take of what the ex-Soviets longingly call a normal society. Asked to comment on the role of personal communications technology in the defeat of Communism, he turned the question around to lament these technologies' grip on us—"man-made miracles" we don't understand but serve and worship. Surely the personal computer and the fax machine, which kept Russia's democratic forces in touch with the world during last August's coup, deserve a better rap.

Yes, democratic capitalism allows vulgar tastes to assert themselves; but I wondered if there wasn't something shockingly selfish about suggesting that misery and oppression for most people were at least in some ways preferable to a society less appreciative of the things we enlightened

*Cathy Young, our regular Russian Presswatch columnist, is the author of* Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*


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few cherish. It fell to Ralph Ellison to observe that in a democracy, "the individual has the responsibility to sort out the good from the false. No intellectuals will liberate us from this responsibility; it always has to come back to you." Ultimately, even Bellow relented enough to express the hope that art and literature will survive if even a tiny fraction of the population pursues the life of the mind.

The political role of intellectuals proved an even more contentious issue. Czeslaw Milosz voiced his unease over a backlash against the intelligentsia in eastern Europe: "In Poland, a small group of intellectuals contributed to the downfall of Communism and then wanted to do good for people, but the people don't necessarily like that." Toward the end of the conference, Mircea Mihaies, a journalist and political commentator from Timisoara, was—more justifiably—bitter about the state of affairs in Romania, prompting one listener to question this "contempt for the masses" once they are no longer willing to support the intellectuals. Mihaies said that it was not contempt but "desperate compassion," and Eda Kriseova, Czech writer and adviser to President Havel, added wistfully, "We are disappointed that people don't want freedom, they want a parent to tell them what to do."

Ah, but what do intellectuals want? On the final panel, Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulic (whose new collection of essays, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*, is so good one can overlook the blurb from Gloria Steinem), charged that the conference had focused too little on the theme of "Intellectuals as Bad Guys." She outlined the substantial contribution of writers and academics to the nationalist passions ravaging what used to be Yugoslavia—for example, by quibbling about the number of authors from this or that ethnic group in the school curriculum (sound familiar?). The case of Yugoslavia "shows how dangerous it is when writers and intellectuals are taken seriously," Drakulic summed up, ending on a Paul Johnsonesque note about the perils of faith in the moral superiority of intellectuals.

In fact, Intellectuals as Bad Guys had not been altogether neglected. Progressive Western intellectuals took quite a drubbing. Conference director and *Partisan Review* executive editor Edith Kurzweil suggested that the American left should follow the example of the French ex-Communists and perform public penance. Doris Lessing, once a worshipper at the leftist altar herself, was positively scathing. "We remember what happened last time the prescription that writers should deal with social injustice came to power: socialist realism," she declared, adding that either today's P.C. watchdogs do not know what their historical antecedents are, or, worse than that, "they know, and do not care."

(West) German poet and critic Hans Enzensberger spoke of "Intellectuals as Hatemongers," citing choice nuggets of nationalist and class bloodlust and trying to answer the unflattering question of "why intellectuals have been so successful in the hate business." He voiced relief at the poets' "much-lamented loss of authority," which means they are no longer expected to articulate other people's rage—but cautioned that eastern Europe could still be a different story, despite the fact that its dissidents (with numerous exceptions) have broken the cycle of violent rhetoric by embracing a more civilized discourse.

Richard Pipes, in his belated tribute to the late Andrei Sakharov, made a similar distinction between the old utopian intelligentsia and that of Sakharov's generation, which fought to reaffirm moral values and individual rights. (Solzhenitsyn, in contrast, got short shrift: both Pipes and Slavic languages professor Sidney Monas characterized him as "out of touch" and his recent works as unreadable.) Even so, there was remarkably little cheering for the current extraordinary role of intellectuals in east European politics. Blaga Dimitrova, herself an example of this trend as poet, novelist, and vice president of Bulgaria—her earlier speech was a rather lovely allegory of the dissident as Sisyphus who has suddenly succeeded in pushing the stone to the top of the hill and now finds himself occasionally nostalgic for his old task—insisted that it was merely a transitional phenomenon needed to fill a vacuum, since "we have no real politics yet."

The emerging consensus clearly favored William F. Buckley, Jr.'s timeless dictum that one is better off entrusting government to 200 people randomly picked out of the phone book than to 200 Harvard professors; "I find it amusing," Susan Sontag remarked in that caustic way she has, "that intellectuals should be the first to admit that intellectuals aren't fit to run a government. In a country where, in 1996, a large segment of the population may vote for Dan Quayle, I think we should also be able to entertain the idea of electing a serious intellectual." Tatyana Tolstaya intervened to say that east Europeans had good reasons to distrust leadership by intellectuals, since "we already had Lenin, an intellectual, as head of state."

One could argue, of course, whether Lenin was really an intellectual or merely a monomaniacal disgruntled would-be lawyer; I also wondered if I was listening to the same Tolstaya who, in an interview to the Moscow weekly *Stolitsa* last fall, sneered at the American professor who had approvingly told her that America was an anti-intellectual country. But this was Tatyana Tolstaya at her least controversial; earlier she had offered a gallant defense of Russian cultural imperialism, asserting that the only alternative was the narrow nationalism of small groups. She also had the tact to complain that while she used to be able to feel at home anywhere in Russia, she was now denied that feeling even in Moscow or St. Petersburg, because of claims that these cities were built on lands taken by the Russians from "some Karels or Finnish-speaking tribes." "I am made to feel that I am a conqueror," Tolstaya proclaimed with regal indignation. "I came and took all those wonderful lands, all those swamps, from tribes that lived there, caught fish, whatever. And all that was created by our hands, culture, is dismissed."

No Finns were on hand to protest that their ancestors might not have done a bad job of building a culture either, but what time was left for questions and answers was taken up by angry Ukrainians. When one of them suggested that instead of nationalism or imperialism there could be a "glorious mosaic" of cultures, Tolstaya shot back that this was a mere metaphor "and therefore, like all metaphors, can be dismissed." I don't know if Richard Lourie had any particular person in mind when, later that day, he said that Russian intellectuals need to learn how to listen. But some of them would also do well to learn how not to assume imperious airs that someone not as sophisticated as they might confuse with arrogance. ❐



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# To Die in Bed

*by James Bowman*

*Oh, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,*
*Alone and palely loitering?*
*The sedge has withered from the lake,*
*And no birds sing!*

In case you've forgotten the answer to John Keats's question, the pale knight has fallen for the original *femme fatale*, the babe-licious Belle Dame Sans Merci. After a few sweet moans, she has spirited him off to her elfin grot, lullèd him to sleep, and, next thing you know, the guy's history.

Keats, who was himself mortally ill and in love with a woman he thought was killing him, found the link between sex and death in his reading of Spenser, but the trope was well established in Western literature and mythology. In Shakespeare's day, the standard euphemistic verb meaning "to experience orgasm" was "to die." Today, after the no-fault sex of the sixties and seventies, AIDS has given the sex-death connection a new resonance. We need a Keats or a Spenser to exploit this revived mythic potentiality, but all we have instead are the ham-fisted mythmakers of Hollywood.

Remember what they did to *Beauty and the Beast* last year? The eternal story of Cupid and Psyche was brutally (talk about beasts!) reduced to a feminist parable. Stephen King's *Sleepwalkers* is at least not politically motivated, but it makes just about as much of a mess of the Belle Dame as Disney did of its damned Belle. The fatal temptress here (Alice Krige) is a sort of vampire that can change shapes. She sleeps with her vampire son (Brian Krause), and when they perform the act of darkness together they generate lots of blue light. Both of them feed upon the blood of young virgins.

The only thing that frightens them is cats; they are dogged by cats—otherwise docile animals whose heroic attempts to save people from the vampires look about as natural as Toonces, the Cat Who Could Drive a Car, on "Saturday Night Live." Mama vampire uses her handsome son as a catspaw—you should pardon the expression—to inveigle a young virgin (the generically named Mädchen Amick) into what mama hopes will be a fatal love affair. Their make-out session in the cemetery (waggishly called "Homeland") is meant to reduce her to a little shriveled corpse, but before he can get to the really yummy blood they are interrupted by an ultimately ill-fated cop and his trusty cat . . .

Well, okay, it's ridiculous. But the point is that Tanya the virgin, who is understandably eager to become an ex-virgin, just got unlucky. All she would have had to do was pick a guy who wasn't a vampire and sex would have been what it is to most well-adjusted teenagers: recreational and hygienic. Instead of the mythic horror's attaching itself to sex, it is only stipulated of sex with cute, shape-shifting vampires who drive Trans-Ams—something most of us do not find it difficult to avoid. No, if Hollywood wants to tackle the sex-death complex, as

*James Bowman,* The American Spectator*'s movie critic, is the American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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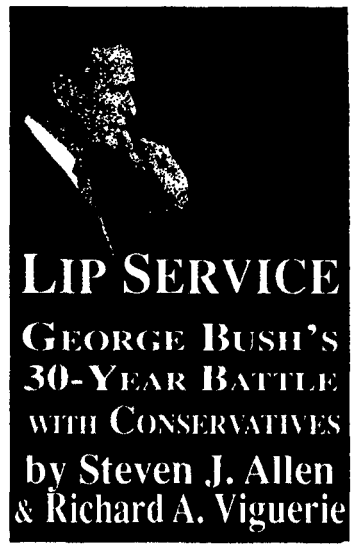


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it not infrequently does, it does better to stick to the realistic conventions of, say, the police thriller.

This is what *Basic Instinct* does, and the film should be commended for at least not inventing any para-human creatures who insult our imaginations. It also taps into a genuine reservoir of potentially mythic male anxiety. The beautiful woman who murders her lovers with an ice pick at the moment of orgasm comes, I take it, from male brooding upon the Tough Woman myth, to which I have so often had occasion to call readers' attention before. Thelma and Louise are liberating figures for women, but their daughters are the killer broads who haunt the male imagination in films like *Sea of Love*, *Final Analysis*, and, now, *Basic Instinct*.

In *Sea of Love* it wasn't the girl after all (phew! everything's okay); in *Final Analysis* la Belle Dame turned out to be after just money, not Richard Gere's soul. But in *Basic Instinct* they go all the way: it *is* the girl—maybe more than one of them—and she is a lesbian, or bisexual, who does it for kicks. Scary, huh guys? That is why the film tries to take the association between sex and danger beyond the point at which we discover, we think, whodunit. Instead of allowing Michael Douglas's flirtation with a violent death in bed—something that gives him a real rush—to end in a sweet domestic idyll, the movie's final shot is of an ice pick under the bed of the cutie who, we think, didn't dunit.

If the idea is to preserve something of the terror that the sex-death juxtaposition has aroused earlier in the film, it doesn't work. The spare ice pick means that either the authors are playing with us or the principals are playing with each other. Either it may not have happened the way we thought it did, but they're not going to tell us, or else the ice pick is going to be a sex-toy so that Michael Douglas can recapture some of the danger-thrill that came with what he calls "the f--- of the century." Whichever it is, our involvement has ceased. This couple may be right for each other, but the Belle Dame touches not us if we don't even know that she's killed anybody.

Michael Douglas is more Philip Marlowe than Christopher Marlowe, but the two have in common a taste for dangerous and forbidden indulgences. Some say that it was an ice pick rather than a dagger that killed the sixteenth-century Marlowe. His *Edward II* is, like all of his plays, both repellent and fascinating, and you might expect that in the hands of Derek Jarman, who is himself an AIDS sufferer, there would be some pretty heavy-duty overtones of sex-death. But Marlowe is scarcely visible beneath the sumptuous, *Caravaggio*-like surface of this film. It is too narcissistic on the one hand and too political (the wicked power establishment are all homophobes while the gay king is supported by a real-life demonstration by homosexual activists) on the other to produce a truly Marlovian challenge to the prudishness of the universe.

Now that's *really* scary stuff. Marlowe braves not merely the babe with the ice pick but the God who has said "Thou shalt not." Derek Jarman does not believe in that God anyway, and the fact that he, like other AIDS activists, is looking around for someone else to blame for his predicament is hardly emotionally compelling to the rest of us. There is an interesting variation on the theme here, though, as Queen Isabella's Dame sans Merci, played by Tilda Swinton, destroys her husband (Steven Waddington) not because he has yielded to her but because he hasn't. Like Potiphar's wife, she is the image of the sex-danger that is not optional, that gets you just from being around women. Yet she is merely trivialized here by association with that tiredest of targets, the homophobic, snobbish, corrupt, imperialist, fox-hunting British upper classes.

Sometimes it seems as if there can never again be a British production of a classic play without some such anachronistic (and stupid) politicization. That is one reason why we should be appreciative of such American productions as Orson Welles's *Othello*, first shown in 1952, which has just been restored and re-released. Here is one of the great sex-death documents in cultural history made to look like an exercise in Theatre of the Absurd. All the night-time scenes, for example, are obviously filmed in broad daylight and no one thinks anything about it. When Welles as Othello asks Desdemona (Suzanne Cloutier) "Are not you a strumpet?" her "No!" comes before he can get the words out of his mouth. Is this a tic on the aging soundtrack, or just part of the general surreal effect?

Welles pares the Shakespearean words down to the bone and the unfleshed skeleton does a macabre dance that is more interesting than moving. Stress falls not on the verbal expressions of emotion but on the weird paradoxes and enigmatic tautologies embedded in the text: "I am not what I am," "he is that he is," "what you know you know." The splendidly nasty Micheàl MacLiammòir as Iago says to Roderigo "Put money in thy purse," and, without any of the context of Iago's pretending to try to corrupt Desdemona on his gullible friend's behalf, it sounds as if a bit of good advice is being offered, apropos of nothing, to cheer him up.

The result of this razing of the context makes Othello's jealous passion nearly as arbitrary as Iago's malevolence. You would think that the association of sex and death would be even more terrifying for being so largely random and unaccounted for, but in fact both the tragic feeling and the mythic resonances of the play are chilled out of it by Welles's almost balletic stylization.

Skipping rapidly over Woody Allen's *Shadows and Fog*, whose appallingly awful pastiche of Bergman and Kafka makes neither love nor death in the least convincing, we come to the Film of the Month: Jaco van Dormael's *Toto le Heros*, which is full of wit, intelligence, genuine feeling, and utterly captivating performances from all its actors. It is in a way a remake of François Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* (starring Jeanne Moreau as the most convincing Belle Dame sans Merci ever), a picture I revere. By rights I should be extremely cross about van Dormael's post-modernist deconstruction of it in *Toto*. If Woody Allen can't get away with making fake Bergman, why should van Dormael get away with making fake Truffaut?

The answer is: I don't know, but he does. Triumphantly. He has taken the basic story line of two men's passion for the same woman and twisted it into knots. The men are enemies rather than friends. Hatred is as important here as love, but by the end it is impossible to tell them apart. The two men are Doppel-



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gängers of each other and the woman they love is really two women, who are also Doppelgängers. All three of them are children, adults, and old people, yet there is no narrative continuity either to their lives or to the story. The history in *Jules et Jim*, and therefore its epic character, is not only cut completely but jumbled up so that our sense of time jams: the kids seem to be growing up in the fifties or early sixties, yet they are seventyish by the end, in a world that is recognizably contemporary.

In every frame the love that destroys and the hatred that sustains are present, but they are paired with their opposites, so that the mood is as mixed up as the relationships of the characters and the plot sequence. Instead of the plangently folksy song "Le Tourbillon," which is the leitmotif of *Jules et Jim*, there is a gorgeous little number by Charles Trenet in the style of a thirties dance band called "Boom" ("When our heart goes boom/Everything goes boom with it:/It's love, love, love")—and of course various things do go boom, with tragic effect. The famous scene of bone grinding in a crematorium from the conclusion of Truffaut's masterpiece is reshot *à la* Dormael, and its emotional impact is completely transformed—from bittersweet melancholy to something approaching hilarity as the dead hero's ashes are scattered (not allowed in *Jules et Jim*) by a 1930s style pilot in goggles who tears the packet of Toto's remains open with his teeth.

This whole scene is accompanied by laughter, that of the late Toto (Michel Bouquet) loudest of all. Yet it is not at all black comedy. Always the film's pervading sense of humanity and genuine compassion is uppermost, as it is in *Jules et Jim*. I have never before seen a film that could treat its characters in this tricksy, ironic, self-referential way and still make us believe in them and love them and laugh with them and weep for them. I wouldn't have believed it possible, but van Dormael has done it. And the thrill of seeing him pull it off is not unlike that of believing for a moment in non-destructive sexual love. That is a sweet illusion and a necessary one if life is to go on. *Toto le Heros* doesn't buy it anymore than *Jules et Jim* did, but it is somehow a more hopeful and joyous film than it would be if it had: ❐


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# THE CONSERVATIVE CRACK-UP

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Simon & Schuster/319 pages/$23

*reviewed by* GEORGE GILDER

I first encountered the writing of R. Emmett (Bob) Tyrrell, Jr. in 1973 during a visit to the Ripon Society offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Apparently flung aside with some force by one of the liberal Republicans in the house, Tyrrell's magazine was splayed on the far side of an unused desk among piles of other discarded writings.

At the time, I was obsessed with sex. In order to grab my attention, you had to go for my glands—unless, of course, you were so lucky as to command a raft of intriguing statistics on the plight of the poor. Poverty seemed to me then almost as enticing as sex and far more readily available to an anti-feminist in Cambridge. But Bob had had the wit to emblazon the cover of his magazine with articles on sex. So I stole it.

The articles on sex turned out to be extremely solid work, buttressed by footnotes and illustrated by alluring black etchings of a turkey and a bearded king, possibly Lear. Gary North was for sex, including every last one of the two sexes, and David Brudnoy was against this extravagance. Just as the wily Tyrrell had presumably planned, I rushed back to the lead editorial and "The Continuing Crisis."

It struck me right away that out there in Bloomington, Indiana, wherever that was, and by whatever means, sexual or bionic, they had come up with a real all-out Whangdoodle—as Kentucky Colonel Henry Watterson had termed the 28-year-old H. L. Mencken—not a bogus Whangdoodle, no sophomoric simulation of William F. Buckley, Jr. or Whittaker Chambers, but a real Whangdoodle, like Mencken himself.

I had spent the previous three years researching and writing *Sexual Suicide*, a somber diatribe against feminism. According to Tyrrell, I could have saved myself a lot of trouble if I had just followed his "Har Har" declaration and laughed them out of the house. I now realize he was right. In the entire world there is no job—as far as I know—so thankless as criticizing feminism. In general, feminists rarely read or fondle anything whatsoever except other feminists. Faced with a male anti-feminist, even conservatives cringe and curl their lips, thinking him somehow sullied by the contagion of his subject.

At that time, I was a pathetic victim of what Tyrrell in his new book, *The Conservative Crack-Up*, calls the *Kultursmog*. It is emitted from "universities, policy institutes, protest movements, the media, and all those other groups that serve as the smokestack industries of American culture," with the presumed distinction that unlike the factories of Gary and Detroit, the liberal stinktanks of Washington and Cambridge offer no worthwhile products with the smoke. Enveloping the political arena, the *Kultursmog* can smother all conservative themes, twist them out of shape and caricature them, because conservatives have no countervailing cultural power, scant literary imagination, and little will to dominate the world of entertaining ideas. It was terrible; until the eruption of Tyrrell, we could hardly breathe.

As a real Whangdoodle, Bob Tyrrell flew above all this, propelled by great, ozone-eating guffaws. A feminist? Merely "one of those gassed up hags bemoaning the tyranny of her glands," so he wrote in my stolen issue of *The Alternative* (as the *Spectator* was then called). George McGovern? "The great Clod Populist, muttering that Americans 'were the real losers' " when they spurned him in the 1972 election.

Nor did our compassionate scribe neglect the poor:

> How well I recall Camelot's claim that seventeen million Americans lived in poverty. Then Old Beagle Ears waved his magic wand, doubled the power of the state, and by the middle of his fated reign, the number of poor had jumped to thirty-four million. Then there was that report . . . to the effect that thirty-seven million Americans were dying of starvation. Further investigation indicated that . . . the problem was really how to get a family of imbeciles off a diet of Coca-Cola and potato chips, and that is, given our vestigial scruples about individual freedom, a difficult demand . . .

He concluded:

> The New Class, or Puritan Chic as I choose to call it, is best understood as political folderol. . . . Not one of [its] principles or proposals can be adhered to for long without slamming chin first into a contradiction. . . . How, for instance, can one oppose racism while advocating quotas? How can one favor increased wealth for the poor without supporting economic growth? How can one reasonably expect an improved environment without encouraging scientific research? And of course, how can one talk of expanding freedom while wishing away one of the greatest extirpators of freedom in modern times, Communism?

Here in 1973, he had it all, the entire portfolio of ideas that was eventually to bring Ronald Reagan to the presidency. And much more, he had a defiant style and wit galore that was not prevalent among the Reagan forces.

Where did it come from? Now, in *The Conservative Crack-Up*, our wonderful Whangdoodle has divulged the source. Before bursting forth on the national scene, Tyrrell was first marinated for ten years—six hours a day—in a chlorinated natatorium.

*George Gilder's most recent book is* Life After Television, *published this month by W. W. Norton.*



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In other words, it may have been something in the water. Tyrrell attended Indiana University and was a member of its world-beating swim team, which held nine global records and lost points only when, halfway through a race, one of its stars, possibly Tyrrell, discovered he was swimming the wrong stroke. After spending four years in the chlorinated tub with other near naked amphibians kicking in his face, gasping for breath and snatches of the Mozart or Puccini blazing on the loudspeaker, or giving a clogged ear to Coach Doc Counsilman's counsels on Bernoulli's law, Tyrrell may have been suffering a few holes in his ozone layer.

Fortunately for us, he has never recovered. Although he deceptively begins his book with its only dull stretch—ruminations on the life and aristocratic Roman glories of Luigi Barzini—Tyrrell then quotes Russell Kirk's brave lament: "I am a conservative. Quite possibly I am on the losing side; often I think so." Tyrrell retorts, "Well, the hell with that." And we're off, with Chet Jastremski splashing away toward world records far in the lead but Tyrrell ready to take over as soon as he can get out of the freaking water.

After graduation, he dried out deep in the stacks of the college library, pursuing graduate laurels in history, only to emerge in the late 1960s, blinking in wild surmise. There, looming before him, as he recounts in his book, were

> an expanding crowd of bug-eyed messiahs, heralding a New Age, wherein war would be passé and the citizenry would convene daily to monitor the government's business . . . workers would have vast stretches of leisure in which to compose poetry or sonatas, midst the marijuana fumes. . . . Sex would be for our time what religion had been for the middle ages and with the same promise of celestial mysteries. . . . The impetuous among the faculty might in the dark of night slip into a Marcusean paradise of wild libidinous *evoes*, where there could be tragedies: untimely hernias . . . while atop the most intellectual cheerleader of the class of '72 . . .

Bursting in air were not only *evoes* (outcries of wild bacchic frenzy). Bombs too went off; the Indiana library was twice torched; Chancellor Clark Kerr of the University of California was assaulted during a speech on the I.U. campus; the head of the National Organization for Women told Pete Rozelle of the National Football League to prepare for the mass entry of women onto his teams—since girls, once liberated from institutionalized sexism, would grow as bulky and belligerent as middle linebackers; Columbia University collected profound apologies from Bloomington when Professor Rudolph Montague, visiting from New York, was pasted with a cream pie during a Marxoid discourse on "Progressive Solutions to the Urban Crisis"; and Susan Sontag declaimed that "the U.S. is a nation founded on genocide" and that "the white race is a cancer of human history" (and eventually won a five-year genius grant of $340,000 from the MacArthur Foundation). "It was within that kaleidoscopic rapture of drugs-liberation-dissent-revolution that *The American Spectator* was hatched" in "a dilapidated old farmhouse standing shakily on forty hilly acres of eroding Hoosier topsoil."

Of all these amazing events at I.U., only Professor Montague was a hoax, contrived by conservatives. The professor's role was performed by a Vietnam vet, then a sophomore at the university, and the pie-throwing, accompanied by the cry, "Montague, you Commie," was a smash hit. Montague became a hero on the left and Tyrrell became a hero on the right. And as predicted by the *Spectator* folk, the incident showed that even conservatives could win media renown if they rivaled the left in violent theater. Of course, the administration was more indignant at the sham attack on Montague than at the real assault on Clark Kerr.

The *Spectator* kited even higher, lovely as a cloud in the *Kulturmog*, becoming a national conservative beacon, as avidly read by dissident students at Harvard and Berkeley as at Indiana. But though Tyrrell worshipped William F. Buckley, Jr. no less than H. L. Mencken, he never accepted the dolorous European strain of conservative thought now and then espoused at *National Review*, where the Hapsburg pretender sometimes held forth as a columnist.

*The Conservative Crack-Up* takes a grand tour of the U.S. right of the fifties and sixties, from Richard Weaver's fulminations against William of Occam and Libertarian screeds against the Pentagon and FBI to traditionalist proposals for an American theocracy "consistent with the fantasies of some revered Spanish monk of a distant century"—from Whittaker Chambers's dismal prophecies of doom for capitalism to a regrettably forgotten speaker at the Philadelphia Society with glowing eyes and orange hands, achieved through a gargantuan diet of carrots.

In part, *The Conservative Crack-Up* is a devastating exposé. Like most exposés, it occasionally goes too far. I agree that the right deserves censure, but Irving Kristol is the leading sage of our movement. Surely it was tasteless of Tyrrell to disclose Kristol's early advice to him that he apply to law school. Imagine, unleashing on the world a Whangdoodle lawyer! Tyrrell also might have finessed revealing Kristol's amazing command of an ideological sensor so acute that it could isolate a vestige of conservative loyalty even in a David Gergen (gergen, n., a Republican suffering from terminal *Post*itis, see below). Surely, it was also impertinent to reveal that the gergenized Michael Deaver, the veritable Nicholas Brady of the Reagan Administration, in whom so many of us so long reposed our hopes for the future of the nation, ended up on Martha's Vineyard worshiping at the shrine of Lillian Hellman and William Styron. "At least literary people,



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unlike generals, want to bomb only themselves," wrote Deaver perceptively.

Tyrrell, you will be happy to hear, also oversteps the bounds of propriety in ravishing the left. For example, he might well not have actually named the eminent journalist who, under the stress of covering the Reagan boom, suffered throughout the 1980s from the enduring anguish of a severe case of Koro (an African and Far Eastern malady, in which the patient senses a sudden shrinking of his male member). And why, oh why, does Tyrrell feel it necessary to ruin the laureled retirement of William Buckley's alpine pal John Kenneth Galbraith, by quoting his sexist observation in 1984: "That the Soviet economy has made great material progress in recent years is evident both from the statistics . . . and from the general urban scene. . . . One sees it in the appearance of solid well-being of the people on the streets, the close-to-murderous traffic, the incredible exfoliation of apartment houses, and the general aspect of restaurants, theaters, and shops. . . . Partly, the Russian system succeeds, because, in contrast with the Western industrial economies, it makes full use of its manpower." Professor, you must mean personpower!

Tyrrell is at his best in pillorying the neoliberals. He shows that the neoliberalism celebrated in *Newsweek* and elsewhere as "America's most exciting new intellectual movement" is almost entirely devoid of intellectual content. Neoliberals merely sniff the Zeitgeist: they are "all nose and no brain." During the crest of Reagan's prestige in the early 1980s, neoliberals moved cosmetically right. But when Tyrrell attended one of their soirées, he discovered that they were all liberals at heart, shocked into breathless rage by sexism, and he was forced to fade away "behind the bulbous paunch of a nearby professor."

Neopresidents Gephardt and Hartpence (remember them?) and neopundits Peters and Kinsley are all harpooned. "The planet earth could be imperiled by pestilence and flames, and Michael Kinsley would insist on making just one more point about New York financier Felix Rohatyn's tax writeoffs."

Weathervanes for the *Kultursmog*, Kinsley et al. display the decline of conservatism and register the crack-up of the right. By the early nineties, as the right dissolved into xenophobic denunciations of the Mexicans and Japanese for working too hard, the neoliberals were nearly pure left. Taking note of the decline of interest in conservatism, they slipped back "to wherever it was that liberalism might take them: voting rights for trees, Medicaid for house plants."

Tyrrell was prophetic. Even Paul Tsongas upheld his pro-business stance ("Democrats are all for employment; it is only employers they can't stand") only until attacked for it; thence he hunkered down behind liberal bromides and soon disappeared altogether. The formerly neo Clinton is now pure hard left, with a mad feminist wife, seeking condoms and litigation rights for toddlers. The Democratic party has virtually no existence except as an aggregation of special interests financed by government. No matter what a Democrat says (try Daniel Patrick Moynihan), he must invariably vote with the National Education Association and NOW.

But we already knew most of this from the incandescent *Liberal Crack-Up*. The issue is why conservatism cracked. Tyrrell's interesting answer is lack of lust for politics and flair for communication. The country club Republicans took over, and no matter what great goals they planned each day after arranging a tie and socks to rhyme with their lime green trousers, they immediately tripped every morning over the *Washington Post* on their front doorsteps and fell flat on their faces in the *Kultursmog*, in awe of the moral superiority of Mary McGrory, Richard Cohen, and Colman McCarthy. Gergens all, stricken by *Post*itis.

Conservatives had few writers or publicists who could long resist. Even George Will, whom Tyrrell confesses was the *Spectator*'s first Washington correspondent, was gergened, succumbing to the D.C. spending culture to such an extent that he declared the nation "undertaxed." Read his lips, he's a liberal. In liberalism's greatest triumph, comparable in its dimensions to the conservative victory at the Berlin Wall, even William Buckley finally fell, writing a book in favor of a national service corps: a huge new tax hike and regulatory morass for all competent young people, implying a moral value in government service superior to the moral value of creating jobs and serving customers.

In a fateful scoop, Tyrrell also warns us against a dire threat from the right entirely unreported before, a towering menace in the guise of the most exalted critic and elegant polemicist in the realms of neoconservatism. Hilton Kramer, he reveals, is

> the embodiment of the homicidal intellectual, and frankly I wish he had remained on the left. . . . It is alarming that his movement to the right continues, for if he ever falls under the influence of those conservatives who reverence the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, he could become truly dangerous. Conservatism has not yet had a mass murderer on its side. In point of fact, the most famous assassins in recent American history have been progressives of one sort or another. Hilton armed could blemish our spotless record. . . .
>
> I believe that the experts will agree that he can be dismissed as a malcontent, but do not turn your back on him.

A real Whangdoodle doesn't mince. But there is a question. What is the meaning of all his talk of Puritan Chic? Tyrrell used the term in 1973 as an homage to Mencken. Mencken was a superb journalist, a luminous stylist, and a relentless polemicist. In the stifling political environment of campus life in the 1960s, Tyrrell was altogether right to feed on this rich inspiration. But as a real Whangdoodle, Tyrrell is his own man with his own unique voice and a new set of targets, and puritanism—a threat to the country on a par with anorexia at a fat farm—has nothing to do with it.

Some of the best chapters of *The Conservative Crack-Up* offer elegant biographical reflections on leading conservatives, from Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, to Kristol, Buckley, and Malcolm Muggeridge. Here the weisenheimer prose gives way to eloquence and insight, and no one has written as profoundly and perceptively about the lives and careers of these men. He reflects that the most successful conservatives ultimately play to the *Kultursmog*. Their conservatism dissolves in its acids as they rise in the clouds of celebrity and they shrink from association with their more adamant followers.



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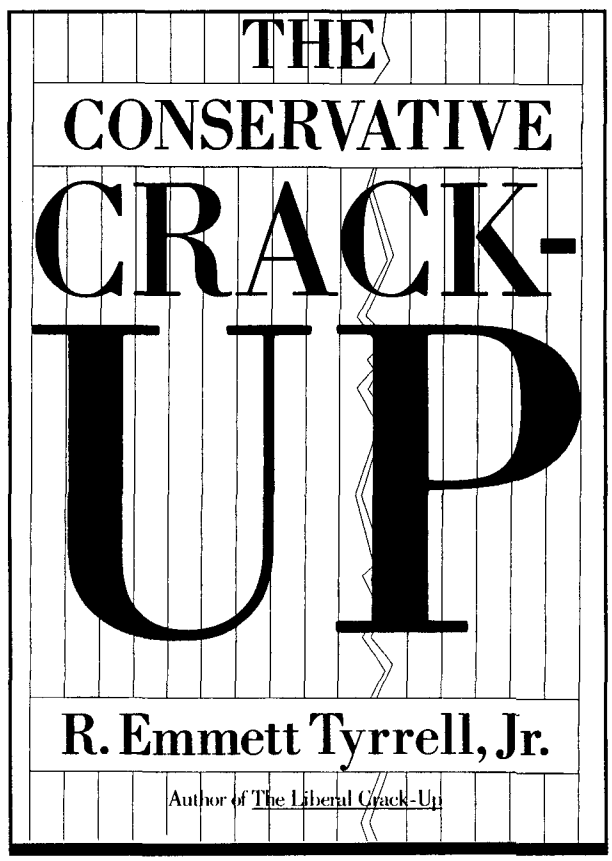
Although Tyrrell does not extend this insight so far, it clearly applies to the contrasting careers of his mentor Mencken and himself. In *The Conservative Crack-Up*, it becomes clear that Tyrrell is no mere new Mencken but something decisively more audacious and important: a genuine and original critic of the superstitions and bigotries of the most influential intellectuals of his day. Mencken, by contrast, showed slavish conformity to the reigning intellectual trends. It was not through defiant truth-telling that he became the most influential journalist of his era, but through dauntless submission to all the delusions and prejudices of the reading classes. Contrary to his protests, Mencken was in fact perfectly attuned to the Zeitgeist of the interwar intelligentsia.

Like most sophisticates of his day, he revered the sexual freedoms of the Continent and disdained the taboos and restraints upheld by mere commoners. In *The Conservative Crack-Up*, Tyrrell understands the redeeming power of discipline and tradition, declares his own disdain for sexual liberation, and shows an acute eye for its costs in the lives of men such as Muggeridge and Taki. Like every aristocrat and intellectual of his time, Mencken scoffed at the titans and culture of commerce. Tyrrell sees both the moral and heroic dimension of entrepreneurial life. Like nearly every fashionable thinker, Mencken assumed that religion was in decline and mostly good for laughs. In *The Conservative Crack-Up*, Tyrrell upholds his Christian roots and beliefs. Mencken disdained Coolidge and Harding and had no clue as to why the economy thrived during their administrations. *The Conservative Crack-Up* contains the best sustained defense of Ronald Reagan (and even Nancy!) yet written. In every major confrontation, Mencken stood by the intellectualoids of his time and won their adoration. Mencken's main critics diminished to a few costive academics, for whom in all eras it is a guild rule to deride the untutored writer. Tyrrell has outraged the entire American publishing and thinking establishment.

Above all, Mencken espoused the regnant fantasies of materialist science. In the light of twentieth-century physics, nineteenth-century determinism and materialism turned out to be a huge superstition. But Mencken revered it as dumbly as any pygmy at his totem pole. Like the most primitive nomad, worshiping trees and storms, Mencken believed in nothing that he could not see or feel, weigh or measure. He was a supreme positivist in an era when positivism crashed in smithereens before Goedel, Heisenberg, Einstein, Solzhenitsyn, and the butterfly effect of Chaos theory.

It was not until near the end of his career in the mid-1930s that Mencken made a serious attack on the Zeitgeist, turning virulently against Franklin D. Roosevelt and his statist followers. But this truly iconoclastic position actually deflated Mencken's reputation, and none of his many chrestomaths even chose to include articles from this era.




Mencken's blind materialism was not a trivial aspect of his thought. It led him, for example, to the wrong position on the supreme moral issue of his lifetime, World War II. As late as 1942, his diaries reveal, Mencken's celebrated critical and intellectual powers, his acclaimed nose for the bogus and bombast, did not endow him with the ability to discriminate between Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler.

At the peak of his powers in *The Conservative Crack-Up*, Tyrrell triumphantly transcends his idol and mentor, and offers both moral and political leadership. Because he truly attacks the icons of the intelligentsia, Tyrrell has never achieved the honors and acclaim that Mencken won. But in all his Carnivals of Buncombe, Mencken never wrote a sustained polemic with the uproarious wit and transilient trenchancy of *The Liberal Crack-Up*. Mencken never launched a work that combined hilarity with the profound insight and penetration of *The Conservative Crack-Up*.

Mencken was a man of urbanity battling against the benighted rural regions of cornbread and revival. Yet Tyrrell found his own carnivals of buncombe in the city culture that Mencken esteemed. As he writes in his new work, "Once through a season or so of neurotic longhaired girls, their guitars, and their e.e. cummings, it was back to a clean well-lighted place for me." Tyrrell retreated to a farmhouse in cornbread country to assault the redoubts of city culture—the *Kulturmog*—where Mencken's scientism, rationalism, secularism, and libertinism had almost totally triumphed.

Tyrrell's quarry was the harvest of Mencken's own set of archaic superstitions and phobias. As Tyrrell writes, "Traditionalists had been alarmed by the emergence of a secular, rootless, mass society, devoid of fixed values and utterly toothless against the perverse and the inhumane. After three decades of inveterate reformers, social engineers, and mountebank therapists the evidence of the traditionalists' good sense was all over the place . . . jumping out windows, dying of drug overdoses, and writhing in numerous other social pathologies." It took not a neo-Mencken but an anti-Mencken, Tyrrell, to attain the elegant flair and torchlike flame that Mencken unleashed in an earlier time, and to transcend it with an inimitable iconoclastic humor and authority all his own. ❐



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# PERFIDIOUS ALBION: THE ABANDONMENT OF HONG KONG 1997

William McGurn

Ethics and Public Policy Center (Distributed by National Book Network, 1-800-462-6420)/188 pages/$16.95

*reviewed by* STUART REID

The worst you can say about Sir Geoffrey Howe is that he has a curious knack of waddling and mincing at the same time. Not even his enemies would describe him as a bad hat. He is, on the contrary, a mild-mannered and deeply inoffensive lawyer. For most of his political career he was known, after a mild hypnotic, as "Mogadon Man"; so lacking in bite was he that Denis Healey, the Labour party's former shadow foreign secretary, said that having an argument with him was like being "savaged by a dead sheep." And yet in 1984, as Mrs. Thatcher's foreign secretary, Howe was responsible for negotiating the final terms of the Joint Declaration on the future of Hong Kong, a deal that today threatens the livelihoods, not to say the lives, of five million Chinese, 3.25 million of whom are British subjects.

It makes you think. Barely two years earlier Great Britain had gone to war with Argentina (even under the junta a saintly nation by comparison with the People's Republic) to defend the liberties of another group of Her Majesty's subjects, the 2,000 sheep farmers, roustabouts, and shopkeepers who inhabit the Falkland Islands. One thousand and four men died (254 of them British, 750 Argentine) in what is now widely seen as an unnecessary conflict: the open deployment of a single submarine to the South Atlantic would almost certainly have persuaded the Argentines to abandon any thought of taking the islands. But the Falklanders were kith and kin; the Hong Kong Chinese are not. The Hong Kong Chinese indeed are second-class subjects. Although most of them hold British passports, they do not have the right of residence in the United Kingdom. Martin Lee, leader of the colony's democrats and a bitter and brave critic both of London and Peking, aptly describes the Nationality Acts responsible for this singular injustice as the "Hong Kong Exclusion Acts."

In 1984, however, it was still possible to believe that Britain was as concerned to defend the liberties of the Hong Kong Chinese as she had been to defend those of the Falklanders. William McGurn's achievement in *Perfidious Albion* is to demonstrate once and for all that this belief was misplaced. Some of us realized as much at the time, of course, most notably the *Times* columnist Bernard Levin; but in the Crown Colony itself the signing of the Joint Declaration was greeted with enthusiasm: the Hong Kong stock market leapt overnight to a record peak.

The Declaration guaranteed, among other things, that Hong Kong would retain its liberties for fifty years after reverting to Chinese rule in 1997 (the so-called "one country, two systems" formula), and that until 1997 it would be administered by London. The following freedoms were guaranteed in the Declaration—of the person, of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of travel, of movement, of correspondence, of strike, of choice of occupation, of academic research, and of religious belief.

It was all nonsense. Peking had no interest in liberty, and Britain's notional interest in it was circumscribed by its desire to do nothing to offend Peking. In our dealings with the People's Republic we have adopted the obliging manner of the London taxi-driver: "Where to, guv'nor?" We have taken the Chinese exactly where they wanted to go, and by the shortest route. To all intents and purposes, Peking now rules Hong Kong. In 1984 China agreed to accept a legislature "constituted by elections"; but the elections penciled in for 1988 were canceled, at the behest of Peking. By 1997 only one-third of the legislature will be democratically elected. Thus one of the central planks of the Joint Declaration, one of the principal guarantees of continuing liberty—the understanding that when the British withdrew from Hong Kong the colony would be self-governing—has been abandoned, because it does not suit Peking's purposes. How could it? Democracy and the People's Liberation Army, which is to be stationed in Hong Kong after the handover, are natural enemies.

Tiananmen Square—*such* an embarrassment—did nothing to stiffen British resolve. The official response was muted. "It is a time for sad and sober reflection," said the governor of Hong Kong after the last body was removed from the square. In Peking itself, the British embassy failed to help Hong Kongers stuck in the city during the massacre. If anything, Tiananmen Square made the British more anxious not to upset the Chinese. The authorities refused to grant a permanent site in the colony for a replica of the Peking students' democracy statue. In October 1989, the political adviser of the Hong Kong government assured mainland leaders that Her Majesty's government was well aware of what was not to be tolerated in the colony. "The Hong Kong Government," he told them, "has no intention of allowing Hong Kong to be used for subversive activities against the People's Republic of China." Not long afterwards, five pro-democracy activists were arrested for using bullhorns in public.

But we Brits were by no means the only ones to take a relaxed view of what happened in Tiananmen Square. I was at a dinner party on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, a day or two after the massacre, sadly and, as it happens, soberly reflecting on this latest manifestation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, when a woman opposite me, a very decent sort, said: "I don't know what George Bush is making all this fuss about. After all, we had Kent State . . . "

Most ordinary Americans were outraged, however; so were most ordinary Britons. Even the politicians, for all their

*Stuart Reid is assistant features editor of the London* Sunday Telegraph.



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renewed anxiety not to upset the Chinese, began to realize that something would have to be done to restore confidence in the colony; but the suggestion that the 3.25 million Hong Kongers who hold British passports should be granted right of residence was fiercely resisted by the Tories, who argued that the country could not absorb that many Chinese. Perhaps it could not. No one, however, seriously supposes that three million Chinese would want to settle here. The point about granting them right of residence, as McGurn points out, is that it would provide them with an insurance policy; a reason to stay where they are, at home, among their own people, in congenial surroundings, in the knowledge that they could leave if the worst came to the worst.

In the end, after much bitter debate, some of it perhaps racist in tone, Mrs. Thatcher agreed to offer passports to 50,000 families, which if taken up would have resulted in 150,000 Hong Kongers having the right of residence here. But to qualify for a full passport, each applicant had to complete a 32-page form accompanied by a general guide of twenty-eight pages and reference manuals running to hundreds of pages. Anyone with the stamina to get through all that would have been able to persuade the INS that he qualified for a green card.

And it is to America that McGurn looks for some easing of Hong Kong's plight. Though Hong Kong is, in administrative terms, a British colony (at least theoretically), in economic terms it is a U.S. colony. American investment at $7.1 billion far outstrips British investment. Of the 581 multinational corporations whose Asian operations are based in Hong Kong, 252 are American, only 77 British. Recent changes in U.S. immigration laws will make it easier for Hong Kong Chinese to settle in the United States than it is now for them to settle in Britain. Whether America's exercise in enlightened self-interest (limited though it is, in McGurn's view) steadies the nerve of the colony remains to be seen. So long as Britain remains determined to see the colony handed over in 1997 bound hand and foot, there is little any outside power can do.

*Perfidious Albion* is a brief and lucid account of a dauntingly intricate geopolitical dance of death. McGurn knows his subject intimately, having been stationed in Hong Kong with the *Asian Wall Street Journal* in the late 1980s, and he cares deeply about the people of the colony. He might have yielded to bombast and bitterness, but no: his anger is controlled, his scorn measured. Hannah Arendt introduced us to the banality of evil; McGurn introduces us to the evil of banality. If, like the French (whom God preserve), he regards Albion as perfidious, at least he does not think that the Brits (even those among us who happen to be English) are bad eggs. He admires Britain for bringing stability, justice, and prosperity to Hong Kong; admires, that is, British colonialism at its best. And in his view Hong Kong might have remained under benign British rule indefinitely had it not been for the fidgets in the Foreign Office.

Britain (it must never be forgotten) was under no obligation to return Hong Kong to China. Hong Kong Island and Kowloon were ceded to Britain in perpetuity (following the Opium Wars); only the New Territories were due to return in 1997. The treaties by which these territories were ceded or leased to Britain were always regarded by the Chinese, with some justice, as unequal; and as unequal, and therefore invalid, treaties they could not form the basis of negotiations.

Nevertheless, in 1979 the British decided to press Peking for written guarantees on the future of the colony, apparently to bolster business confidence. Peking refused to put anything in writing; its position on Hong Kong was the same as its position on Taiwan; both were part of China, in theory. That's how it might have remained if the British had left well alone. They did not, with the inevitable consequence, as many now see it, that an "unequal treaty" was imposed on Hong Kong. "So obvious is this in hindsight," writes McGurn, "that some observers think Britain had decided to abandon Hong Kong long before the talks. The opinion was lent some credence by former prime minister Edward Heath's admission that he knew of such a plan as far back as 1971. Under this theory, Britain was to take a blustery line at the outset precisely to provoke the Chinese into insisting on taking back the colony."

But why? McGurn provides no hard answers. As William F. Buckley, Jr. notes in his excellent introduction, *Perfidious Albion* "will both inform and mystify." This is not meant as a criticism. The reason for the mystery is that it is impossible to read the Foreign Office mind; the mandarins of Whitehall are more inscrutable than the civil servants of Peking. Perhaps, however, money has influenced British policy. Mainland China is a potentially lucrative market, and becoming more attractive to investors by the day. As we saw earlier this year, during the National People's Congress, Deng is winning the battle against the reactionary elements. He looked a good bet to many Westerners when he came to power in 1978; he looks an even better bet today. Why bug him? Sure, there may be another Tiananmen Square, but you can't make an omelet without breaking heads. Meanwhile, even poor, mistreated Hong Kong is on a roll. Listen to the hardened optimists. In March, the *Economist* editorialized: "Few people are naive enough to believe that, after 1997, Hong Kong will be a place whose citizens can choose their rulers or freely speak their minds. *But more and more people already believe that Hong Kong will still be a place where money can be made; maybe, as China itself booms, even more than they make there now.*" (Emphasis added.) So, it's all right, then. To hell with democracy and free speech. To hell with the family, too. What business is it of the markets if, when the colony reverts to the PRC, Hong Kong mothers, like their mainland sisters, are forced to abort their second children?

Certainly, the indicators suggest that China will abandon Marxism in favor of the sort of authoritarian corporatism that works so profitably on the Pacific Rim. But if that happens—"if," because "indicators" are no more reliable than opinion polls—the men and women responsible for the Joint Declaration must not be allowed to claim a victory; must not be allowed to say that the Bill McGurns and the Bernard Levins and the Martin Lees were making a fuss about nothing. They were not; they are not. Hong Kong has been betrayed. A happy (or tyranno-corporatist) ending will not in retrospect make the British government's conduct in this matter any the less lamentable, or, if you prefer, perfidious. ❐



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# A DAY AT THE BEACH: RECOLLECTIONS

Geoffrey Wolff

Alfred A. Knopf/259 pages/$22

*reviewed by* CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

"The reason I lied as a young man," Geoffrey Wolff has written, "was the same reason my fiction was so awful: I didn't know that anything had happened to me." Astonishing—his life has been more interesting than the average person's, and considerably more interesting than the average Princetonian's. *The Duke of Deception*, Wolff's memoir of his father, is a non-stop picaresque of dodging creditors and the law in the company of a globe-trotting dipsomaniac confidence man with several aliases and a wall full of fake degrees. *A Day at the Beach*—Wolff's uneven collection of autobiographical reminiscences—is something of an unwitting sequel.

After a brief introductory chapter, Wolff reintroduces us to his mercurial family (and Shep, the dog) with a year-by-year tourist's guide to his youthful Christmases, which he rates with Michelin Man–style icons:

> The quality and quantity of gifts received (by me) is bestowed one to four Santas. What I call quality of life [includes:] was an edible holiday feast served in a timely manner? did we live in a house with a fireplace? with a separate bedroom for me? was snow on the ground? was the snow clean? was Daddy . . .

Drunk? Usually very. And in the third chapter, "The Sick Man of Europe," Wolff shows himself to have been very much his father's son in Istanbul—where he spent the early sixties teaching English, chasing prostitutes, and marveling at the Turkish propensity for homosexuality and autoerotic asphyxiation. The pub crawling is relentless:

> Turkish vodka was awful, awful, awful. We all made our own from 180-proof grain alcohol. . . . The sisters at Rejans, working with the same raw material, worked alchemy; they served their vodka chilled and straight in silver thimbles, and none smoother anywhere ever, with a hint of the Seville oranges they were rumored to grow for no reason other than to impart to their vodka a hint of Seville orange.

Wolff is a bit less sanguine about the behavior of the staggering Vermont farmers who attend a girly show in "At the Fair." The yokels in this rural *noir* piece, this Barthesian mythology, shout obscenities at (and perform obscenities on) a troupe of clueless women. Their observations don't bear printing in a family magazine. Leave it at this: Wolff has an acute ear for the stomach-turning, cornball spiel of the carnival barker:

> *You know what you wanna see, they know what you wanna see, that's what you're gonna see. That's exactly what you're gonna see. Shake it loose like a bucket of juice—they're gonna do it. Have no fear, these girls are here. Racy, spicy, horny and red-hot. Hootchy-kootch, a red-hot ramble waiting for you. They're gonna shake it to the east, they're gonna shake it to the west, they're gonna shake it down the middle where you boys like it best. . . .*

Wolff can write about drinking bouts so sensually that it's no surprise where it all ends: the chapter called "Drinking" describes the late-night phone fun that all drinkers will recognize, runs for the umpteenth time through the list of American writers who were alcoholic, and quotes Sinclair Lewis's famous poser: "Can you name five American writers since Poe who did *not* die of alcoholism?" A pedestrian effort on the whole, but the fact that Wolff continues to drink ("No surrender," as Henry Fairlie reportedly used to say) will cheer all tosspots who hope the game is not (quite) up.

Wolff has some interesting drinking buddies. His father drank with Lon Chaney, Jr. and Buster Crabbe. Wolff dated not only Crabbe's daughter but also Hunter S. Thompson's ex, who tried to stab him. His stepmother's first husband was an early developer of LSD. He was tutored by George Steiner and R. P. Blackmur. In *A Day at the Beach*, he lets us know of his friendships with polemicist "Izzy" Stone, journalist "Nick" von Hoffman, critic "Al" Alvarez (yes, that's A. Alvarez's first name), and novelist "Jimmy" Baldwin.

The most interesting character we meet, however, is "Andrew," Harvard kid, son of a "cabinet officer in Eisenhower's administration," best man at Wolff's wedding, off-the-deep-end hippie, "despotic nutritionist," and documentary filmmaker. After years of estrangement, Wolff confronts him, only to find out that Andrew has avoided him because he suspected Wolff of working for the CIA and of betraying him to the government. For Andrew is such a typical communist (with a small "c") that he doesn't stop being a communist until some of the hippies he's been sharing his Vermont farm with suggest he share the farm's title as well. Wolff is saved from obloquy by Andrew's teenage girlfriend, who tells him that Wolff is not *cool* enough to have been a CIA man:

> "Hey, Andrew? guys like this . . . weren't the kind of guys who ratted us out. The pricks who sold us out didn't wear neckties."
>
> "I'm not wearing a necktie," I said.
>
> "Yeah," she said, "but you look like a guy in a necktie. The worst finks were the coolest dudes."

Andrew actually appeared as "John" in *Duke of Deception*. A quick leafing through an almanac and a *Who's Who* will reveal his father as James Henderson Douglas, Jr., Ike's secretary of the Air Force from 1957 to 1959. Andrew, in fact, is one John Douglas. Who is this

*Christopher Caldwell is assistant managing editor of* The American Spectator.



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guy? And why does Wolff give us a pseudonymous mystery man when he's merely rehashing old material about a non–public figure?

John/Andrew is an example of Wolff's annoying tendency to reuse and recycle material, a tendency familiar to buyers of Grateful Dead albums: only half the songs are ever new. The "M—t D—n" whose brother he gives a chemistry set is clearly the Margaret Dean he bought mittens for in *Duke of Deception.* (Again: Why all the subterfuge?) The Washington material echoes *Bad Debts,* his first novel. The best line in the book—about Wolff's uncertainty whether to describe his distant mother as "a Spanish Communist exiled to Russia or a Russian princess exiled to Spain"—is another comebacker. The book opens with a letter he wrote his brother Tobias from Cambridge: "We live in an age when contraception and the Bomb and rejected opportunities usurp each other as negative functions . . ." A good send-up of his own youthful pretension and preciosity, but it's already in *Duke of Deception.* And Wolff's Princeton novel *The Final Club.* And Tobias's memoir *This Boy's Life.*

The heart-attack narrative has become an American literary staple, and Wolff's title piece—in which he weaves his cardiac history into an account of a nightmare vacation in Sint Maarten—stands up well against Philip Roth's and Howard Moss's, to name just a couple. Wolff doesn't suffer a real myocardial infarction, only a mildly "stenosed" aortic valve, which strikes him down after he has been booked for a week into an exorbitant "resort" located at the end of a runway, paid six dollars apiece for shrimp, had all his money stolen, and been forced to share his digs with a crowd of fat tourists from Queens and their unneutered dog, whom the reader comes to know as Five-Legged Butch.

But Butch isn't along on Wolff's other holidays, and it's a shame. In this rich country, older writers are always in danger of mistaking the hobbies their writing success has permitted them for the adventures that allowed their writing success. If the narrative doesn't exactly die after Wolff's successful open-heart surgery, then it *does* retire to Leisure World. "Matterhorn" is saved by an informative account of Edward Whymper's tragic ascent of the peak in 1865, but is otherwise a fairly predictable Men's-Movement-manifesto, road-not-taken piece about *not* climbing the Matterhorn. The longest and last essay, "Waterway," should clearly have been lopped. This log of a sailing trip in the Bahamas winds up a paean to his family—his son's seamanship and generosity, his wife's patience and insight—that reads like a pastiche of schlock genres: part–1984 Reagan campaign plug ("If I couldn't have counted on Priscilla to continue to see and say unambiguously, we wouldn't have come to this place in this way"), part-Geritol commercial ("I thought of it as her rainbow, and do. When I met Priscilla in 1963, she was temperamentally unlike anyone I'd known; I fell in love with her for the inexpressible reasons people fall in love"), and part–Hewlett Packard prospectus ("Imagine someone who sees things and systems whole, and who articulates pre-


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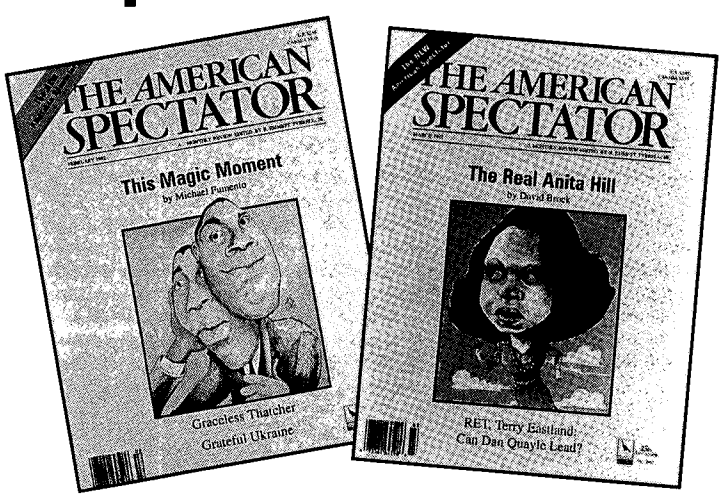


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cisely what she sees . . . because her comprehension is a renewable resource driven by curiosity").

Wolff just doesn't tackle these serious emotions well, and much of the book is an apology for not having taken the high road to being a "Writer," as he puts it, in the solemn sense. "It has been a point of dispute between me and people I love that I suffer from a failure of gravity." The people Wolff loves are right. He's happier larking around, and prone to *haut*-preppy failings: brand-name litanies; smirky synonym-chasing, like saying "tits-up" for "belly-up"; and off-color punsmanship, like translating Choate's motto *Quai* [surely *Quae*?] *sivi bona tibi* not as "I have sought to do thee good," but as "We seek to do thee: good." Is *this* all Wolff has to offer us in place of his hobo father and R. P. Blackmur?

Wolff even lets the reader in on his little equivocations: "No, I'm being flip . . ." "Not so fast . . ." "I mean to say . . ." There's a postmodern self-consciousness here, a need to tell us how he got his material and to assure us that writing, especially his own writing, is nothing special. Wolff would probably see it as a Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*, but it reads more like a stop-me-if-you've-heard-this-one self-effacement. Maybe a childhood on the lam has inclined Wolff to undervalue the adventures he has had. Perhaps he really is still unaware that anything has happened to him. That's not a good quality in a memoirist. ❐

## UNDOING DRUGS: BEYOND LEGALIZATION

Daniel K. Benjamin and Roger Leroy Miller

Basic Books/296 pages/$23

*reviewed by* JOHN R. DUNLAP

Among today's fault-line issues, there are few so inert as the topic of drug legalization. It is one of the handful of topics that I declare off-limits in an argumentation course I teach once a year. Don't get me wrong. I support free speech. As an English teacher, though, I oppose clichés, and the topic of drug legalization has become so mired in bromides, pro and con, as to leave the 20-year-old college junior without hope of doing more than sliding into a verbal bog.

Those who argue against drug legalization have the advantage of living with a national policy that they can, at least, live with. They don't feel much need to exert themselves in defense of their position, and their debater's points are never too far removed from their underlying warrant: drugs promote moral debasement. If drugs are legalized, drug use is certain to increase, and drug *abuse* is almost certain to increase proportionately. America's alcohol trouble is bad enough without placing a snort of cocaine on the legal footing of a shot of rye.

Those who favor drug legalization (just over 30 percent of the adult population, according to polls) are stuck on an uphill grade, contending with political inertia as well as dialectical counterpoint. Forced to exert themselves, they have come up with good arguments, chiefly in support of the proposition that drug prohibition makes the drug problem worse than it might otherwise be. But a tiresome repetition has worn down the persuasive power of such arguments, leaving the unmoved majority to yawn while the legalizers wax testy and self-righteous.

Given the consequent impasse, and amid evidence that the war on drugs has failed abysmally, *Undoing Drugs* proposes a third way, which the authors call "the Constitutional Alternative." Daniel K. Benjamin and Roger Leroy Miller, professors of economics at Clemson University, argue that drug prohibition should go the way of alcohol prohibition—which is not to say necessarily that drugs should be legalized.

Despite an obvious sympathy for the legalization arguments, which take up more than half the book, the authors reject national drug legalization as democratically unacceptable (a majority of Americans just won't tolerate it) and prudentially inadvisable, a real Pandora's Box if the arguments of the legalizers turn out to have been merely plausible.

The analogy drawn by legalizers between the current era of antidrug warfare and the era of Prohibition (1920-33), a familiar mainstay of the drug debate, is pursued at length by Benjamin and Miller. We are reminded that Prohibition successfully reduced the number of the nation's drinkers by about 30 percent, but that most of those who went on the wagon were only casual drinkers to begin with. Their relatively insignificant teetotalism was achieved at the cost of a staggering rise in organized crime and gang violence, a higher consumption of hard liquor in place of beer and wine, an increase of disease and death caused by adulterated booze, and so forth.

Less familiar is Benjamin and Miller's analysis of the legal status of Prohibition. When Prohibition ended with the Twenty-first Amendment in 1933, a blanket legalization of alcohol did not thereby kick in. What the Twenty-first Amendment did, precisely, was to end the role of the federal government as enforcer of most laws pertaining to alcoholic beverages. Apart from matters of interstate commerce and taxation, responsibility for alcohol control was returned to the several states.

As it happened, Kansas, Mississippi, and Oklahoma chose to continue Prohibition. Seventeen other states elected to permit the distribution of alcoholic beverages only through state-controlled outlets. More than thirty states delegated enforcement authority further by allowing local jurisdictions to prohibit or permit alcohol as they saw fit. Most states limited the hours at which alcoholic bever-

*John R. Dunlap teaches English at Santa Clara University and contributes regularly to* The American Spectator.



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ages could be purchased. Although Kansas, Mississippi, and Oklahoma are no longer completely dry, a bewildering variety of regulatory schemes continues in the several states to this day.

Benjamin and Miller argue that such diversity is all to the good: good in practice because it responds fittingly to the different social values and tempers of different parts of the nation; good in principle because it follows both the spirit and the letter of a Constitution that was carefully drafted to respect regional differences. No small triumph of the Twenty-first Amendment was the implicit deference paid to the Tenth Amendment, part of the original Bill of Rights: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Thus do Benjamin and Miller complete the otherwise shopworn analogy with Prohibition. What we need is not a federal legalization of drugs but an end to the federal monopoly on drug policy. Nor would this "Constitutional Alternative" require the cumbersome process of amendment. In an appendix on "Legal Perspectives," the authors show the principal legal mechanism required to achieve a state-level refocusing of drug policy: simply change the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 "so as to expressly enunciate a policy of delegation."

What are the likely consequences of decentralizing drug policy? Perhaps because they are not just academicians (Benjamin is a former chief of staff at the U.S. Department of Labor, and Miller is a legal scholar as well as an economist and a producer of film documentaries), the authors are able to answer this question with a persuasive concreteness and nuance.

First and most important, we will no longer have a *national* policy on drugs, a policy necessarily born of political compromise "onerous enough to impose substantial costs upon us, but not tough enough to get the job done." Under the Constitutional Alternative, the states will adjust their drug policies "to correspond to the differing preferences and circumstances of their citizens." Over time, some states (or some localities in those states that further delegate enforcement authority) will choose tougher measures against drugs; others will adopt more lenient policies, including regulated legalization.

The states which decide to get tough will no longer be able to "hide behind the veil of federal leadership." Tougher laws cost money, and state legislators will have to raise the taxes needed to pay for the laws demanded by their antidrug constituents. State and local law enforcement agencies will thus be under greater pressure and closer scrutiny to enforce antidrug laws efficiently, concentrating on suppliers instead of drug users.

In the states with liberalized drug laws, the illegal market can be expected to dry up, as happened quickly to the whiskey barons when the national policy of Prohibition ended in 1933. But there is an added benefit to anticipate.

Current national drug policy fosters the spread of extremely violent drug gangs like the Jamaican posses in the East and the Bloods and Crips in the West. The national gangs know that what works in Los Angeles will work in Seattle and Kansas City; their operations can easily be cloned from one place to another. Under the Constitutional Alternative, the diversity of drug policies across the several states will destroy the organizational advantage now enjoyed by the national gangs, eliminating the principal reason for their existence.

The "quiltlike pattern of laws" likely to emerge under the Constitutional Alternative has other advantages. Changes will come gradually, by trial and error through a lengthy course of experimentation and innovation. Each state will in effect become a laboratory from which the others can learn what works and what doesn't. Fifty state legislatures and hundreds of county and municipal governments will be compelled to think hard and argue cogently about drug policy, with their constituents listening very closely to what they say. Competition among the several jurisdictions will help to guard civil liberties in the get-tough regions and to prevent libertarian excesses in the lenient ones. Unlike federal-scale fiascoes engineered by distant politicos and bureaucrats, the inevitable mistakes and false turns will be relatively easy to contain and to reverse.

Some readers may be put off by certain features of the exposition in *Undoing Drugs*. Although richly informative, the book is somewhat cloying in its repetitiousness. A pivotal chapter ("Farewell to the Founding Fathers"), on the drug war's alleged threats to our civil liberties, seems overwrought and oddly sophomoric; nor will the authors earn points from antidrug hardliners by lumping all "mood-altering substances," from caffeine to crack, under the sanguine cover term "psychoactives."

Nonetheless, Benjamin and Miller have made a superb argument. They avoid any exaggerated claims for their proposition, and they anticipate just about every objection. The Constitutional Alternative is a serious proposal by two serious scholars who deserve an attentive hearing. ❐



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# SEIZE THE MOMENT: AMERICA'S CHALLENGE IN A ONE-SUPERPOWER WORLD

Richard M. Nixon

Simon & Schuster/322 pages/$25

*reviewed by* JACK KEMP

After half a century in public life, Richard Nixon has written what may be his most important book. Early in his career, Nixon helped shape a bipartisan consensus against Soviet expansionism. Today, considering the triumph of the West, he concludes, "We now have a cause even greater than the defeat of communism—the victory of freedom." The defeat of the Soviet Empire does not guarantee the spread of democracy, and Nixon believes that, much as at the outset of the Cold War, America faces a profound choice: whether to accept the responsibility and the opportunity of leading the Free World or to stand down from the struggle for freedom and the rule of law.

Some Americans, on the left and—ironically—the right, would have us retreat to Fortress America, defend against direct threats to our shores, and abandon the rest of the world to fate. They act as if the weak nation George Washington spoke of when he recommended no "entangling alliances" had not grown in the last 200 years. In an age in which trade accounts for nearly a third of our GNP, we cannot just cash in our chips and "come home." Consider it: from 1980 to 1990, total world exports rose from roughly $2 trillion to $3.4 trillion, up nearly 70 percent. American manufacturing exports to Japan are up by 70 percent since 1987, and have created half a million American jobs. Our total exports have doubled since 1985, reaching $422 billion in 1991. We are once again the number-one export power in the world. And the doubling of American trade with Latin America under President Bush's proposed North American Free Trade Agreement could create 1.2 million new jobs for American workers.

Ever since Adam Smith demolished mercantilism, we have understood that free trade allows nations to do what they do best and to benefit from the advantages of their competitors. It is a formula for unlimited economic growth for all nations. Nixon points to the example of the "Asian Tigers" (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea). In 1949, per capita income in both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan was about $50. Today, capitalist Taiwan's per capita income is $6,355, more than nineteen times higher than that of the PRC. Tiny, free-trading Singapore, whose economy has grown at a 7-percent rate over the last twenty-five years, attained a per capita GNP of $10,450 in 1989. This phenomenal record of economic growth was not engineered by the World Bank or the IMF but by investors and entrepreneurs. From this persuasive evidence Nixon derives a simple doctrine: "Foreign trade, not foreign aid."

The former socialist countries of the Eastern Bloc are engaged in an unprecedented transformation, and their success must be a paramount objective of American foreign policy. In *Seize the Moment*, written before Gorbachev's fall from power, Nixon is skeptical of proposals for massive Western economic aid to Gorbachev's government:

> With its estimated GNP of $1,900 billion—the equivalent of the U.S. economy in 1977—the former Soviet Union's fundamental economic problem cannot be lack of resources. Instead, it is a misapplication of those resources and the absence of proper economic incentives for individuals and enterprises. Until the new noncommunist leadership tackles those issues, no amount of Western aid will bring the economy out of its present nosedive.

With the rise of Boris Yeltsin since the completion of *Seize the Moment*, Nixon has recently warmed to the idea of aid to the former Soviet Union. In a March 11 speech in Washington, he generally endorsed a five-year, $100-billion aid program. But events have not brought the instant restoration of "incentives for individuals and enterprises." While committed to free market reforms, Yeltsin's government has moved only tentatively towards privatization and monetary reform. Even the lifting of wage and price controls has been hampered by the continuing involvement of government bureaucracy.

Today, there's an intellectual battle on for the hearts and minds of the former socialist world. In one camp are East Coast liberal Keynesians like Harvard's Jeffrey Sachs, and Western bankers who call for IMF-style austerity measures to beat eastern Europe's economies into submission. In the other are the neoconservative, free-market American economists who argue for entrepreneurial capitalism, rapid privatization, sound money, and liberalized trade. At stake is not only the economic future of east European countries, but the future of entrepreneurial capitalism around the world.

For while Freedom House could report this year—for the first time—that a majority of the world's nations are democratic, it is far from certain that free markets will take hold in these fledgling republics. And without free markets, as Milton Friedman reminded us years ago, democracy itself is in peril.

For years, the IMF and World Bank have imposed their "No pain, no gain" philosophy on struggling Third World nations. Some forty-eight countries have received IMF money and advice. Yet most are still poor. In fact, IMF loans have created permanent debtor nations from Africa to South America. These policies are rooted in the Malthusian vision of economics that earned it the name of "the dismal science"—before the Reagan Revolution demonstrated the

*Jack Kemp is Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.*



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power of incentives and sound money to create long-term, non-inflationary economic growth.

Yet the demand-side taskmasters still offer their failed prescription of shock therapy for the former socialist countries. They recommend currency devaluations, high taxes, draconian budget cuts, and piecemeal privatization. To smooth the transition, they advise generous transfusions of foreign government credits. Jeffrey Sachs's Harvard Plan, built on the IMF model, calls for a new Marshall Plan for the East. Forgotten is that the Marshall Plan transferred more aid to stagnating Britain than to fast-growing West Germany. West Germany, under its social-compact, free-enterprise Finance Minister, Ludwig Erhard, quickly outpaced Britain, whose socialistic economic policies—subsidized by Marshall funds—stifled growth.

The former socialist nations do not need our cash; they are rich in the most valuable commodity of all: human capital. Some, like Russia, possess vast natural resources. These nations have only to unleash the full potential of their peoples to realize a new era of prosperity and growth. Nixon writes:

> The leaders of the Asian Tigers understood that the most basic human motivation—the desire to better the condition of one's self and family—is the mainspring of economic growth. People, regardless of their education and background, have responded to such basic economic incentives from the dawn of time in every corner of the world.

And in a bold departure from the conventional wisdom, Nixon affirms that democratic capitalism can bring prosperity and freedom even to that "corner of the word" called the Middle East. He calls for supporting those Muslim countries—like Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia, and Turkey—that have moved in varying degrees toward free markets. For the rise of democratic capitalism in the Middle East will be the surest guarantee of our vital interests in the Persian Gulf. In a region barely familiar with the principles of freedom, Israel has been a shining example, and must continue to be our preeminent ally there.

Nixon underscores the importance of the Arab-Israeli peace process to the future of the Middle East, but stumbles in recounting Israel's record. He states that while the Palestinian autonomy talks called for in the Camp David Accords should have been completed by 1984, "To put it bluntly, Israel stonewalled the United States and Egypt." In actual fact, it was Egypt that unilaterally withdrew from the autonomy talks in August of 1982, to protest Israel's invasion of Lebanon. He further suggests Israel should surrender land for peace because the 1967 Six-Day War—in which the occupied territories were captured—"resulted from actions by both sides." But it was Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser who closed the Straits of Tiran and blockaded Israel's sea lanes in May of 1967, an act of war under international law (the blockade coincided with the massing of troops on Israel's borders). These factual errors are all the more surprising given Nixon's friendliness toward Israel.

But, on the whole, *Seize the Moment* eschews the controversies of the past and presents a grand strategy for the future. Tempered by Nixon's trademark "realism," it paints a bold view of America's role. Nixon's refusal to be bound by the dogmas of the past is even more refreshing. In his concluding chapter, "The Renewal of America," the President who signed the 1972 ABM treaty declares unequivocally:

> The United States must commit itself to deploying by the end of the decade a limited space- and ground-based defense against ballistic missiles through the SDI. With nuclear weapons and their delivery systems proliferating, we cannot count on the chimera of arms control alone. We need defenses.

As America embarked on what President Kennedy called our "long, twilight struggle" with Communism, Republicans and Democrats forged a common commitment to winning the Cold War. That consensus became frayed during the struggle for Vietnam and after. But the advent of democratic government in the former Soviet Union permits us once again to support a bipartisan foreign policy in the cause of freedom. Nixon goes a long way toward mapping out that strategy. *Seize the Moment* is a textbook for "winning the peace," and for realizing the dream of all people everywhere for rule of law, private property, and human rights. ❐

## CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 10)

lic purse, after which Bush at least is derided for allegedly failing to understand that vote-buying is good politics.

Well, has Bush's "social" spending been too great or too small? Which is it? Why is it worse for Buchanan and Bush to be, how you say, pragmatic, than for Reagan to have been so? Frum should have made up his mind on those points before sitting down to type. Had he done that, however, he would have had a much smaller stick with which to whack Pat Buchanan, which, considering the title of his opuscule, appears to have been its chief purpose. —*John D. King*
*Austin, Texas*

**Hold Your Trojan Horses**

One does not have to be one of the "liberals" parodied with varying degrees of insight and wit in your magazine—and I most certainly am not—or even to agree with many extremist gay activists—which, on a range of issues, I do not—to have been disturbed by the paranoid hallucinations to which Tom Bethell gave voice in his report on gay demonstrators in San Francisco ("Trojan Army," *TAS*, April 1992).

Using offhand, jocular comments he overheard as his only evidence, Mr. Bethell informs us that homosexuals "are obliged to perpetuate themselves by re-education rather than reproduction, and it is the whole of society they wish to re-educate." He claims that the demonstrations he saw looked like a recruitment drive.

Such views are perhaps not rare among those who also believe that Jews have horns or that Gypsies steal babies, but most people above a certain level of social experience have been exposed to the suggestion—I hope you're sitting down for this, Mr. Bethell—that sexual preference is inherent in the individual and is not something that spreads through conversion or "recruitment," as if it were a doctrine.

I have never met a homosexual who thought that anyone could be made into a homosexual without being one already. Gays don't go on "recruitment drives" to perpetuate themselves—partly because they don't have to. Mr. Bethell can rest assured that gays are not out to seduce or "re-educate" his children, who, realistically, probably have more to fear from

*(continued on page 63)*



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## CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 61)

heterosexual perverts in our society.

If the comments in Mr. Bethell's article were intended as a joke, it was a mean-spirited and unfunny one. Or if, as the tone of the article would rather suggest, he was making a serious warning, then such dangerous, hateful fictions have no place in what is otherwise a magazine of quality.

*—Christopher F. Roth*
*Chicago, Illinois*

I wish the otherwise redoubtable Tom Bethell would understand that nitwits like those he writes about in the April 1992 *TAS* no more represent most homosexuals than folks who wear white sheets and lynch blacks represent mainstream conservatives. Mr. Bethell might be surprised to learn that there are many poofters out there, this writer included, who actually work for a living, pay taxes (grudgingly), and vote Republican. These people do not hang about in gay bars, do not jump in the sack with a different fella each night, and most assuredly do not hand out condoms on the campuses of Catholic universities.

I was raised in a suburban family of four boys and *two* loving parents (male and female) who were as devoted to their sons as they were to each other. Three of the boys are resolutely straight. One of them turned out to be gay. I say "turned out" because that is exactly how it was: I was treated no differently from the other brothers, was neither molested nor abused, and was never encouraged to "go gay" by any homosexual. Yet ever since I was old enough to have amorous feelings, they have been toward men. Sorry Tom, that's just the way it is. I don't need to be "cured" because there is nothing wrong with me. I go to church regularly, confess my sins, and while it troubles me that homosexual behavior goes against Scripture, so does divorce, working on the Sabbath, and harboring angry thoughts. "He who is free from sin . . ."

So please lighten up, Tom. There are more of us quiet conservative poofs than you could possibly imagine. . . . I am withholding my name because it is nobody's damn business how I live my private life.

*—A long-time and loyal subscriber*
*New York, New York*



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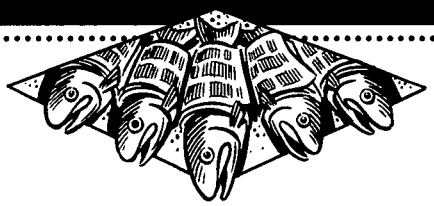

### Sacramento Bee

A noble interlude in the life of a great news organ:

**An apology to our readers**

We made an insensitive error in judgment in Friday's edition, and I want to apologize for it.

On page A1, we ran what was initially seen as a cute, innocent picture of two children dressing up for Halloween. But what was not caught in the editing process was the stereotype enforced in the picture of an African-American child dressed in a maid's uniform putting lipstick on a white child dressed in a party outfit.

The implication of the images in the picture and the words in the headline should have been recognized and they should not have run, even though it is a sad commentary on our society that pictures of children of different ethnic backgrounds at play carry such a bitter memory.

We were wrong, and our sincere apologies are offered to all of you. A very hard lesson in the area of sensitivity has been learned.

**Gregory E. Favre**
**Executive Editor**

*[November 2, 1991]*

### New York Review of Books

In Peter Singer's seminal review of Jeremy Rifkin's *Beyond Beef*, we see the beginnings of the condoms-for-cattle movement:

If it seems odd that a book about cattle should be so important, consider the growth of the cattle industry alongside that of the world's population. That the growth in world population is one of the greatest risks to the survival of all species on this planet is now a commonplace; but do we ever hear of the threat from the world's cattle population, now 1.28 billion and with a combined weight exceeding that of the human population? Is it not, Rifkin asks, a little disingenuous of intellectuals and planners in the first world to dwell on the number of babies being born in less affluent nations, while ignoring the overpopulation of cattle, to which we ourselves contribute?

*[April 9, 1992]*

### Newsday

In a suave review of Marilyn French's latest tome, Carolyn See slanders a deceased Romanian progressive:

French writes persuasively of the perfidy of men. She does not lack for bad examples: Jerry Falwell, who wants women to stay home and have children; Jesse Helms, who echoes these sentiments; Nicholas Ceausescu, who echoed these sentiments so much that he left Romania with a plethora of pitiful orphans riddled with AIDS.

*[March 31, 1992]*

### The Great Books Series

Confronting the tough questions of our time, with Miss Pam Postema, female Tarzan:

Even though it hurts to do so, I think about umpiring every day. I loved the freedom that came with the job, and I liked the theory—because that's all it ever turned out to be—that if you worked hard enough, you could advance to the big leagues. I can count on one hand the times I didn't give 100 percent on the field. Maybe if I had kissed ass, I'd still be umpiring. But that's not the way I operate. The way I see it, I tried my best but got screwed by a system that wasn't built for women.

Let me be more blunt: almost all of the people in the baseball community don't want anyone interrupting their little male-dominated way of life. They want big, fat male umpires. They want those macho, tobacco-chewing, sleazy sort of borderline alcoholics. If you fit their idea of what a good umpire is, then you're fine. And isn't that the way society is? Nobody wants any glitches. . . . And I'll never understand why it's easier for a female to become an astronaut or cop or fire fighter or soldier or Supreme Court justice than it is to become a major league umpire. For Christ sakes, it's only baseball.

Personally, I don't think women will ever be considered equals until they're allowed to walk down the street with their shirts off, like men.

*[from* You've Got to Have Balls to Make It in This League, *by Pam Postema, Simon & Schuster, 256 pages, $20]*

### Minnesota Women's Press

The gifted Linda Hirschhorn, another progressive suspended forever somewhere in the 1970s:

Linda Hirschhorn will perform a two-hour concert of celebration and song at Beth Jacob Congregation, Mendota Heights. Her music is a fusion of her personal involvement in women's issues, her interest in the pursuit of world peace and her involvement in and love of Judaism. "Passover at the Nuclear Test Site" is one of her original songs. March 29, 4 p.m. Tickets $10.

*[March 25-April 7, 1992]*

### New York Times

Cerebrations from a self-proclaimed birdbrain:

I was glad to see your March 3 letter about pigeons, those very nice birds much maligned by unthinking humans. I have also rescued pigeons and returned them to the "wilds" of their city streets and airspaces.

Often the birds had been struck by cars and were flopping pitiably in gutters when I found them. They often recovered after a week or a month of rest and proper food and were able to fly away.

Pigeons are beautiful, sane, clean, and personable birds. Some are very independent. One, contrary to your letter, *did* bite, and when he bit, held on, so I used garden gloves to handle him. He finally flew boldly away without looking back. Another was so gentle and liked our family so much that when we let him go, he turned in a boomerang arc and returned to us, over and over; we named him Pidge and he lived with us for six years.

A Nobel prize-winning scientist said that humans make a mistake to think that they are separate and apart from the rest of the universe, since we are all made of the same atoms that were once parts of stars, and everything on earth is made of reshuffled atoms. "So we are all literally constructed of stars, and we are all constructed of dog dirt," as he put it.

It doesn't do to set ourselves above pigeons. *—Kate Delano Condax*
*Moorestown, N. J.*

*[March 31, 1992]*



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### New York Times

A memorable testimonial to Katie Couric's hands-on artistry:

"Half of America wants her haircut," said her NBC hair stylist, Anna Febres. Indeed, she has so many qualities with which so many people identify—or want to—that she seems a kind of walking demographic miracle.

It's an appeal that "Today" has used to advantage. Ms. Couric gets away with things, and the program has been able to stretch itself as a result. . . .

In fact, it's hard to imagine Mr. Cronkite—or even Deborah Norville—unwrapping a condom on the air and fitting it over a model of a penis, as Ms. Couric did after Magic Johnson's revelation of his HIV infection.

*[April 9, 1992]*

### Boston Globe

The devastating effect of "mystery pie" on the locution of Senator Edward M. Kennedy's future father-in-law:

It is not until near the end of lunch, over dessert of mystery pie and "Mona Lisa" by Nat King Cole, that a dark side of the relationship with Kennedy is introduced.

"Yes, we're sometimes asked what we think about his past behavior," says her father, "and we need to put that all together.

"I've known Ted Kennedy a lot of years, and when it comes to his behavior—someone asked me about his womanizing. Well, when does dating become womanizing? Does he exploit women? I think his record shows just the opposite. I don't know that there's a member of the U.S. Senate who has ever championed the civil rights of women at all levels, married, single, mothers, unwed, wed—I think his record is the best.

"So how do I feel about Vickie marrying a person who's been dating a great deal? Well, if you look at Ted Kennedy's commitment record as a U.S. senator, I don't know of a member of the Senate who's been there 30 years who's more committed to a more definable or predictable position than Ted Kennedy. So he's a person capable of the finest definition of commitment, and marriage is the ultimate commitment. So if he commits himself that well to the U.S. Senate and to his work as a senator, which has distinguished him as one of the outstanding senators of all time in the U.S. Senate, not just from Massachusetts but from all over the country, then certainly, his commitment to Vickie is a sound one, if you go by the other expressions of his prior commitments."

*[April 2, 1992]*

### The Great Books Series

Plain English, from the enlightened pen of Professor T. Todorov, an Orwell for our time:

My subject—the discovery *self* makes of the *other*—is so enormous that any general formulation soon ramifies into countless categories and directions. We can discover the other in ourselves, realize we are not a homogenous substance, radically alien to whatever is not us: as Rimbaud said, *Je est un autre*. But *others* are also "*I*'s: subjects just as I am, whom only my point of view—according to which all of them are *out there* and I alone am *in here*—separates and authentically distinguishes from myself. I can conceive of these others as an abstraction, as an instance of any individual's psychic configuration, as the Other—other in relation to myself, to *me*; or else as a specific social group to which *we* do not belong. This group in turn can be interior to society: women for men, the rich for the poor, the mad for the "normal"; or it can be exterior to society, i.e., another society which will be near or far away, depending on the cases: beings whom everything links to me on the cultural, moral, historical plane; or else unknown qualities, outsiders whose language and customs I do not understand, so foreign that in extreme instances I am reluctant to admit they belong to the same species as my own. It is this problematics of the exterior and remote other that I have chosen—somewhat arbitrarily and because one cannot speak of everything all at once—in order to open an investigation that can never be closed.

*[from* The Conquest of America, *by Tzvetan Todorov, HarperPerennial, 274 pages, $10 paper]*

### New York Post

Congressional oratory of the highest order put to a noble cause by the Poofter's Pol:

As Bill Clinton's New York campaign wound down to its weary end, the Arkansas governor's grass-roots rhetoric was replaced by some frank talk—delivered by Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank.

At a private party at artist David Fisch's Chambers Street loft attended by many of the city's gay movers and shakers, the congressman likened choosing a Democratic presidential candidate to picking up someone in a gay bar. The party was designed to drum up last minute backing, but not funds, for Clinton.

Sources who attended the soiree say Frank, in a push to sway undecided gay Democrats, said that choosing between Clinton and Jerry Brown was "like being in a bar at 3 a.m." and wanting to pick someone up.

"The place is emptying out. You don't have very good choices but you make the best choice that you can," partygoers recount Frank saying. He added that choosing Clinton was not like "you're getting betrothed for life" and that "you don't have to like him in the morning."

*[April 7, 1992]*

### New York Review of Books

In the pages of the authoritative *New York Review*, a clarifying moment:

*To the editors:*

In an otherwise well documented review ["Reconsidering Vietnam," *NYR*, October 10, 1991], Jonathan Mirsky simply asserts that twice as many American Vietnam veterans have committed suicide since the war as were killed in it. Can he give us his documentation for this astonishing statement?

*David Slawson*

*Jonathan Mirsky replies:*

In response to David Slawson: I got the number of suicides from Walter Capps, *The Vietnam Reader*, p. 2 (galley): "More than twice the number of those who lost their lives there [Vietnam] have taken their lives since the war." I've had one or two other letters questioning this statement, and no longer stand by it.

*[April 9, 1992]*

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# Malaise

*by Franz M. Oppenheimer*

*Paris*

Perhaps Francis Fukuyama is not as nutty as we thought. Many Frenchmen, at least, have begun to believe that we are living the end of history. In all the commentaries on France's elections of last March that I read in the newspapers and heard on radio and television, there was not one reflection about the loss of credibility of a French government that has no more than 18 percent of voters behind it and its ability to conduct diplomacy in such traditional theaters of influence as Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. The devastating defeat of François Mitterrand's Socialist party is seen only in its domestic dimension.

Whether President Mitterrand will be able to defend France's odd-man-out position in GATT's Uruguay Round, whether he can make France adhere to the EEC's Maastricht agreements, whether the European currency will be the Ecu or a unit more palatable to the Germans, are all questions left unanswered—unmentioned, in fact—by the commentators. What remained after the fall of Communism of the Gaullist foreign policy—French dreams of dominating the EEC, of mediating between the United States and the Soviet Union (or between Germany and the Soviet Union)—has been swept conclusively into the dustbin of history. The French seem not to mind. Even from a purely domestic standpoint, the decimation of a party that a decade ago took more than half the vote by promising social justice, full employment, and "singing tomorrows" is a momentous event.

It would have been cheering if the collapse of the Socialist party had led to an ascendancy, if not a majority, for the center-right, i.e., for the combined forces of former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and former prime minister Jacques Chirac. But the two party leaders and their lieutenants had squabbled for too long a time among themselves, and they took only 33 percent of the vote—a decline of 4 percent from the last national election (for the European parliament) in 1989. On the brighter side, Jean-Marie Le Pen's radical-right National Front failed to capitalize on discontent with the Socialists' performance and unease with

Moslem immigration. The Front obtained 14 percent of the vote—up 2 percent; too much by any calculation, but less than many commentators had feared.

A recent long profile in the newsmagazine *L'Express* confirms what most commentators have long held: that Le Pen is not only a brute but a liar as well: he has claimed falsely to have fought with the Résistance, for example. And he is certainly an anti-Semite, by the testimony of his first wife. Though he denies it, the charge is given probative support by the sleeve copy of the record "Voices and Songs of the German Revolution—The Third Reich," released by his own record company. When he helped found the National Front in October 1972, its six-man executive committee included not only Le Pen but also two veterans of the Waffen SS and a member of the notorious Vichy militia. Le Pen's personal associations are also unsavory: a close friend from the 1960s, who became the godfather of Le Pen's youngest daughter, served two years in prison for brothel-keeping.

The two environmental parties—the Greens and Ecological Generation—together took 15 percent. Thus, at least 29 percent of the electorate has strayed out of the mainstream of French politics. Adding the Communists, who hung on to 8 percent, over a third of all voters endorsed parties opposed to responsible, modern, democratic government.

That motley minority bloc would pose a threat only if Mitterrand were to make good on his frequent promise to reintroduce proportional representation to parliament. If he were to succeed, with the help of the Communists, France would be in danger of returning to the follies of the Third and Fourth republics, to say nothing of the Weimar Republic. Only defections among the Socialists in the National Assembly could then prevent such an outcome. It is enough to make a good European blanch.

Meanwhile, the French elections have been marked by a singular lack of political passion. Indeed, the only strong views I heard during election week came from an acquaintance, an innkeeper, railing against the ecologists, on the grounds that they planned to take away the "major achievement of the French Revolution": the right of every citizen to hunt and fish. ❐

*Franz M. Oppenheimer is a Washington international lawyer.*



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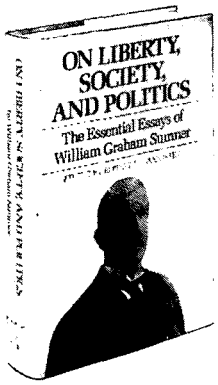


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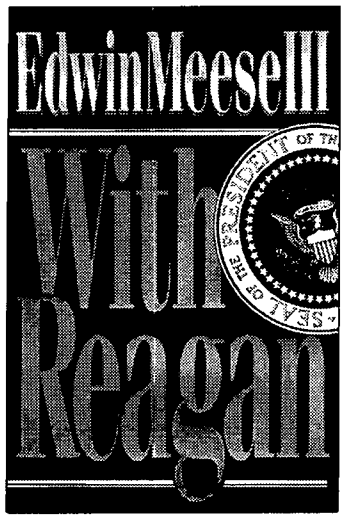


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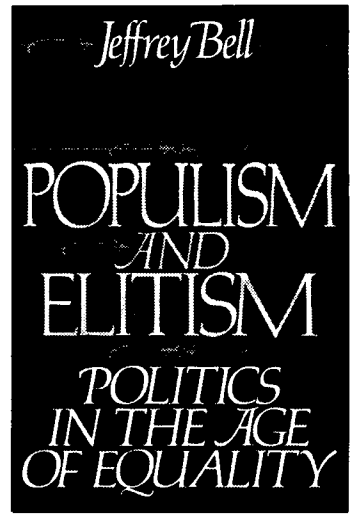


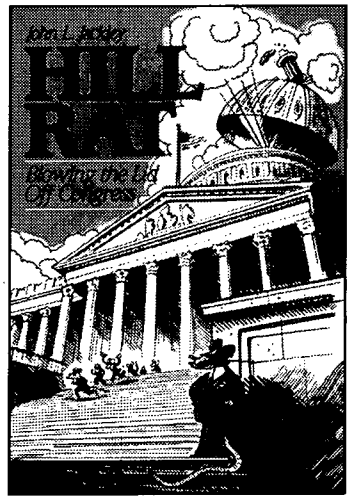


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